NATION

163 Covid variant XFG cases detected in India: INSACOG

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BUSINESS

Markets rise for 4th day in a row on global rally

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Kolkata, Delhi swap Tests against WI and SA

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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No bar on Indians travelling to Saudi Arabia: Sources

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Reports about any restrictions on Indians travelling to Saudi Arabia are incorrect, sources in the government said on Monday. The Saudi government has not issued any notification on this matter, they said. The clarification came after some reports claimed that the Saudi government has imposed restrictions on Indians travelling to that country. "As a matter of practice, during the Hajj season, there are temporary restrictions on short-term visas to avoid overcrowding during this season, which end with the conclusion of Hajj," a source said. *—PTI*

K'taka reports 265 Covid cases, positivity at 40.7%

BENGALURU 9 JUNE

Karnataka on Monday reported 265 Covid-19 cases, pushing the positivity rate to 40.7 per cent. Total cases registered so far in the state this year stands at 1,220, the health department said. Total tests done in the last 24 hours is 650, with 596 RTPCR tests and 54 RAT tests. Active cases in the state have breached 500-mark with 559 cases, of which only two cases required intensive care. A newly emerging Covid-19 variant, XFG, has been detected in India, according to INSACOG data. So far 163 cases have been identified from 6,000-odd cases in the country. The new variant, which harbours four key spike mutations, has achieved rapid global spread following its initial detection in Canada, according to an article in 'The Lancet' journal. However, Karnataka is yet to detect a XFG variant. those alleged vitriolic remarks. *—PTI*

Axiom-4, with Shukla, delayed till tomorrow

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The launch of the Axiom-4 mission, which will carry an Indian astronaut, Shubhanshu Shukla to the International Space Station, has been postponed due to weather conditions, ISRO said in a post on X. The launch was originally scheduled for 10 June but will now take place on 11 June at 5.30pm IST. SpaceX, which is partnering with ISRO and NASA for the mission, said in a post on X that due to high winds in the ascent corridor the launch has been postponed. The Axiom-4 (Ax-4) mission, set for lift-off from Launch Complex 39A of the KSC in Florida, comprises Commander Peggy Whitson, pilot Shukla and specialists Tigor Kapu of Hungary and Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland. The 14-day mission will "realise the return" to human spaceflight for India, Poland, and Hungary. Shukla's travel to space marks India's return to human spaceflight 41 years after Rakesh Sharma scripted history onboard Soviet Russia's Soyuz spacecraft in 1984.

—Agencies

Now, State govt plans to include Tumakuru in GBA

Post stampede, govt mulls moving Chinnaswamy stadium

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

A proposal will soon be submitted to the government to include Tumakuru under the Greater Bengaluru Authority, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Monday.

He added that Tumakuru, around 70km from Bengaluru, is growing rapidly.

"We have developed an industrial hub (at Tumakuru) in an area of 20,000 acre. Many are demanding that Tumakuru should be expanded. A study is being conducted on this. If Tumakuru is included in Greater Bengaluru, it will benefit us in terms of development. We will submit a proposal regarding the same," he told reporters here.

He said that the government will also take a call on extending metro services to Tumakuru.

Referring to his Monday's meeting with Union Minister V Somanna, who represents Tumakuru Lok Sabha constituency, he said, "Somanna has said that Tumakuru requires metro connectivity. Let there be both metro and suburban rail connectivity."

Parameshwara, who is also in-charge minister for Tumakuru, said, "We are proposing to build an arch on the National Highway in Tumakuru." They have sought National Highway Authority's permission.

Govt to shift cricket stadium outside B'luru?

A day after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the government will examine proposals to shift the cricket stadium outside the City, PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi said he has sought the file and the Cabinet is yet to decide.

He also said the lease amount that is being paid by Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) to the government is very low. Siddaramaiah said,

The demand to shift the stadium gained momentum following the 4 June stampede in front of Chinnaswamy Stadium in which 11 people died.

Asked if the PWD department will allocate land if the proposal does comes through, he said, "There is no need for us to give land, they (KSCA) have enough money, they can purchase a hundred acres. Earlier, there was some need, hence the land was given (on lease to KSCA)."

He said the lease was renewed twice – 30 years each. *—PTI*

Identify unused areas to make them public spaces: BBMP tells citizens

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has invited the public to identify vacant and unused areas in their neighbourhoods so that it can be transformed into public spaces. This initiative called 'Bayasidaanthe Bayalu' is open to citizens who care about public areas within the BBMP limits, as well as architects and urban designers, stated a press release issued by BBMP on Monday. Proposals can be submitted until 19 June.

Identified public spaces will be evaluated based on feasibility and impact, said the press release.

Selected locations will be included in a city-wide database of underutilised areas, with some prioritised for redevelopment by BBMP over the next five years. *—PTI*

E-Khata must for building plan approval from 1 July, says BBMP Commissioner

E-Khata has been made mandatory for building plan approval from 1 July, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's Chief Commissioner Maheswar Rao said on Monday. E-Khata is an electronic property certificate that maintains ownership information in an online database. From 1 July, the procedure of forwarding property ownership records to the Revenue Department for verification will also be discontinued. Rao also said under the "Trust & Verify" approach, preliminary plan approvals will be confirmed or rejected with valid reasons by the respective assistant directors (town planning) within a specified timeframe. The BBMP currently provides online building plan approval through the EoDB-OBPS software. *—PTI*

AUTOMATED DOORS MANDATED

Family members of a victim, who died after reportedly falling from an overcrowded train at Mumbra railway station *PHOTO: PTI*

4 fall to death from 2 Mumbai trains

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Four commuters died and nine were injured after falling off two overcrowded local trains in Maharashtra's Thane district during the morning rush hour on Monday, officials said. The incident occurred near Mumbra railway station when the trains were passing each other on a steep turn.

Chief Public Relations Officer of the Central Railway, Swapnil Nila, said the victims were travelling on the footboard of the two trains, one travelling towards Kasara and another travelling towards Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Mumbai.

The commuters were hanging from the doors of the crowded trains and their backpacks brushed against each other as the trains passed in opposite directions, police said.

The guard of a train going towards Kasara alerted the railway authorities about the incident. Those who fell off the trains were rushed to nearby hospitals, where four were declared dead on arrival, police said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the railway administration was probing the cause of the accident.

Deputy CM Eknath Shinde said steps were being taken to help the victims and their families.

MNS President Raj Thackeray, however, said the railways infrastructure in Mumbai has collapsed due to the "hordes" of migrants.

Railway mulls automatic doors

The Railway Ministry has decided to have automatic door closing facilities in coaches of all existing and new local trains for Mumbai Suburban, a senior official said.

All rakes in service will also be redesigned and the door closure facility will be provided in these rakes of Mumbai Suburban, Dilip Kumar, Executive Director, Information and Publicity, Railway Board said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Jilted techie stabs lover to death in City hotel

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

A 33-year-old woman was stabbed to death allegedly by her male friend for ending their illicit relationship, police said here on Monday.

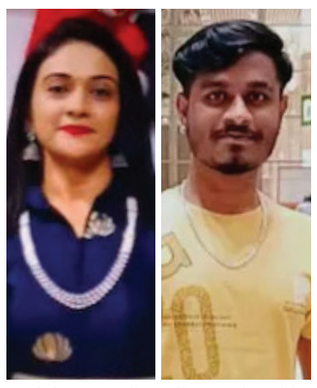
The deceased, Harini R, a resident of Banashankari, was married and had two daughters aged 13 and 10, they said.

The accused, Yashas, 25, a techie, met the woman at a village fair and had been in a relationship with her for the past one year, police said. The murder allegedly occurred on the intervening night of 6 and 7 June at the hotel room.

According to the police, the woman was stabbed to death atleast 12 times by the accused, who had allegedly pre-planned the murder and bought a knife with him. After the crime, he left her body inside the hotel room.

He later went to his home in the City and allegedly inflicted a stab wound on himself and confessed his crime to a constable posted at Kengeri police station.

A senior police officer said that after the woman's family discovered her affair a few months ago, she was reportedly counselled by her family members to end her affair.

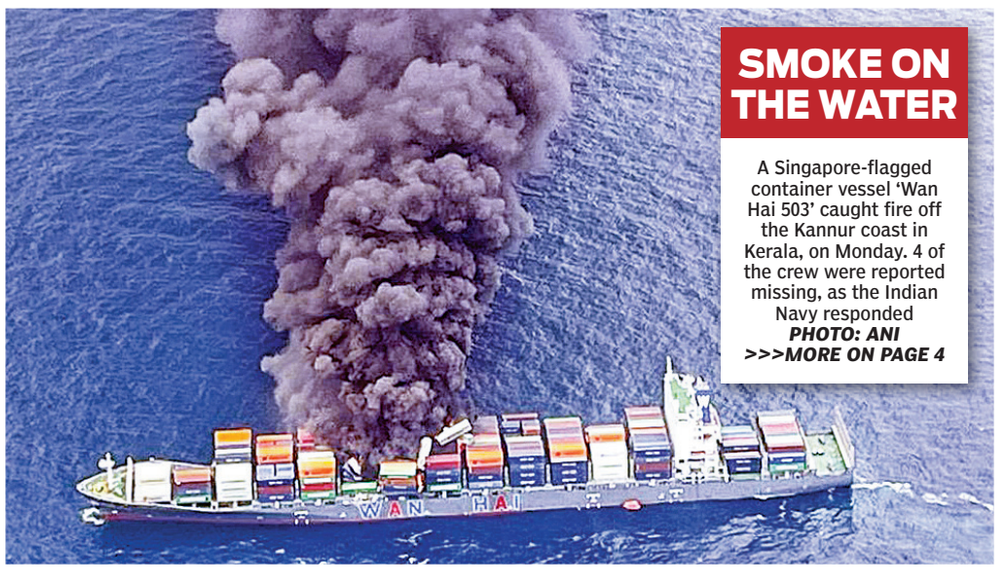


Harini R was allegedly murdered by Yashas, her alleged lover, in an OYO hotel room *PHOTO: X*

Following this, she stopped meeting Yashas and avoided taking his calls. However, upon his insistence, she agreed to meet him for one last time.

He picked up her in his car around 5pm on 6 June and together they went to a hotel, the officer said.

After spending some time together in the hotel room, she told him that she could no longer continue her relationship. He then stabbed her multiple times, the officer said. *—PTI*



SMOKE ON THE WATER

A Singapore-flagged container vessel 'Wan Hai 503' caught fire off the Kannur coast in Kerala, on Monday. 4 of the crew were reported missing, as the Indian Navy responded *PHOTO: ANI*

>>>MORE ON PAGE 4

RCB STAMPEDE: IPS OFFICER CHALLENGES SUSPENSION

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

Senior IPS officer Vikash Kumar Vikash, who was among the five officers suspended in connection with the stampede outside the Chinnaswamy Stadium, has moved the Central Administrative Tribunal challenging his suspension, sources said on Monday.

Vikash, who was the Additional Commissioner of Police (West), moved the tribunal last week, they said.

The tribunal is likely to hear the matter in the days ahead, sources said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on 5 June ordered the suspension of five officers, including those of the Circle Police Inspector of the Cubbon Park police station AK Girish and Assistant Commissioner of Police C Balakrishna, Deputy Commissioner of Police of central division Shekhar H Tekkannavar, and Commissioner of Police Bengaluru Dayananda.

Defending the suspensions, Siddaramaiah on Friday said prima facie those who have not fulfilled their responsibility properly have been suspended.

The suspension order had said, "It is found that there has been on the face of it substantial dereliction of duty by these officers."

Eleven people died in the stampede in Bengaluru and over 50 people were injured. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Meghalaya honeymoon horror: Wife arrested

SHILLONG/GHAZIPUR/INDORE, 9 JUNE

Sonam Raghuvanshi, a 24-year-old woman from Indore, allegedly orchestrated the murder of her husband - Raja Raghuvanshi, during their honeymoon in the scenic town of Sohra in Meghalaya, state DGP I Nongrang said on Monday.

Revealing the shocking details of the chilling murder that triggered manhunt in three states, the officer said the victim was killed by hitmen allegedly hired by Sonam, who later surrendered before the Nandganj Police Station in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur, after the arrest of the three assailants.

The victim, Raja Raghuvanshi, was found dead in a gorge in East Khasi Hills district on 2 June, ten days after the couple went missing.

Sonam had allegedly forced the Raja to wear gold chains worth Rs 10 lakh. The couple allegedly booked only one-way tickets for their honeymoon.

Following the arrests, Meghalaya declared that it was safe for tourists, subtle gloating that the accused weren't locals. *—Agencies*

>>>More on Page 4

EN ROUTE TO GAZA

Greta Thunberg 'kidnapped' by Israel Army

JERUSALEM, 9 JUNE

Israeli forces seized a Gaza-bound aid boat and detained Greta Thunberg and other activists who were on board early Monday, enforcing a longstanding blockade of the Palestinian territory.

"I urge all my friends, family and comrades to put pressure on the Swedish government to release me and the others as soon as possible," Thunberg said in a pre-recorded message released after the ship was halted. She said if the message was released, it meant she was kidnapped.

The Freedom Flotilla Coalition, which had organised the voyage, said "The ship was unlawfully boarded, its unarmed civilian crew abducted, and its life-saving cargo — including baby formula, food and medical supplies — confiscated."

The activists had set out to protest Israel's ongoing military campaign in the Gaza Strip, which is among the deadliest and most destructive since World War II, and its restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid, both of which have put the territory of some 2 million Palestinians at risk of famine.

Greta Thunberg was taken off the boat by the IDF, to be brought to Israel, to then be deported *PHOTO: X*

Adalah, a rights group in Israel that said it was representing the activists, said Israel had "no legal authority" to take over the ship because it was in international waters and because it was headed not to Israel but to the "territorial waters of the state of Palestine".

"The arrest of the unarmed activists, who operated in a civilian manner to provide humanitarian aid, amounts to a serious breach of international law," Adalah said in a statement. *—PTI*

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AS MODI GOVT TURNS 11, CONG, BJP SPAR ON HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

NEW DELHI,

As the Modi-led BJP government turned 11 on Monday, the Congress released a 'report card' highlighting its failures while Union Ministers from the ruling coalition lauded the Prime Ministers achievements.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh in a post on X said that the booklet, '11 Saal, Jhoothe Vikaas ke vade', commemorates "some of the biggest lies of this Government."

He said India's growth is 6.5 per cent over the last year, which is the lowest rate after the Covid period. "So, what is happening in this 11th year of your Sarkaar, PM Modi?"

On the other hand, BJP President JP Nadda asserted that Modi's legacy will be written in golden letters for the positive changes it has affected. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2,3

CCB arrested me on CM's orders: RCB official

HC says no action should be taken against RCB until 12 June over stampede near stadium

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

The Karnataka High Court on Monday restrained officials from taking any coercive action against RCB and event partner DNA Entertainment Pvt Ltd till 12 June over the stampede near M Chinnaswamy Stadium that killed 11 people.

CV Nagesh, representing RCB and DNA, argued that Nikhil Sosale, Head of Marketing at RCB, was not arrested by either Ashok Nagar police (where Sosale stays) or Cubbon Park police (under whose jurisdiction the stadium falls) but by the Central Crime Branch of Bengaluru (CCB).

"It was not part of the investigation, just because the CM said CCB arrested him, even though they are not investigating the case," he contended.

The court then adjourned the hearing on petitions filed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and DNA Entertainment Pvt Ltd to 12 June. In the interim, no coercive action should be taken against the officials of the concerned, it said.

The court also noted that the petition involving Sosale would be taken up separately today.

The hearing witnessed a sharp exchange of words between senior advocate Nagesh and Advocate General Shashikiran Shetty for the State.

Nagesh argued that there was no prima facie case against his clients, and that the allegations were largely composite, involving all three parties -- KSCA, RCB and DNA and added that it was not petitioners, but the Chief Minister of Karnataka who had invited everybody. Shetty countered, saying it was the posts on X by both RCB and DNA that brought people to the stadium.

Justice Krishna Meanwhile, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will travel to New Delhi today to meet Congress high command, where he is expected to discuss various developments. —*PTI*

> **There are lessons to be learned. We will come out with a plan, we have policies for future crowds also. We have to come out with an act, that is what we are also looking for. It is a lesson which we have to learn**
>
>
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

SUSPENDING POLICE OFFICERS LOOKS LIKE SCAPEGOATING: THINK TANK

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The suspension of five police officers before the completion of a detailed investigation would be seen as "scapegoating" and may have a "demoralising" effect on the entire force, an independent think tank on policing has told the State Chief Minister. The Delhi-based Indian Police Foundation (IPF) has also said "isolating" the police force for "punitive" action, while other stakeholders escape scrutiny, distorts the reality of shared responsibility and "misses" the opportunity to draw "comprehensive" lessons for the future —*PTI*

Speaking before the Karnataka High Court, lawyers for Nikhil Sosale said no official grounds for his arrest were declared by officials ***PHOTO: PTI***

I should not have protested in uniform, says cop

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

A Head Constable Narasimharaju, posted at Madiwala police station in Bengaluru, who staged a solo protest against the suspension of the City's Police Commissioner and other officials, is now worried about possible action the government may take against him.

"This was not something we expected after the stampede incident...which made me emotional, and that is why I protested against the decision made by the Karnataka Government. Whenever this kind of incident happens, there is an option to transfer the officers, but suspending officers, including the Police Commissioner of Bengaluru, in fact brings the morale of the department and the employees down," he said.

Narasimharaju, from Pavagada, who holds a Master's degree (MA, B.Ed), lives with his mother and family. "I have only one last option, which is to fight this legally. I am waiting for a call from my DCP madam. Once she calls, I will go and explain my feelings to her. I'm hopeful she will respond positively. I've already received a notice and explained my emotions to my senior officers. Yes, I was emotional, and I admit I shouldn't have protested in uniform, as it goes against protocol," he said. —*ANI*

RAIN ALERT

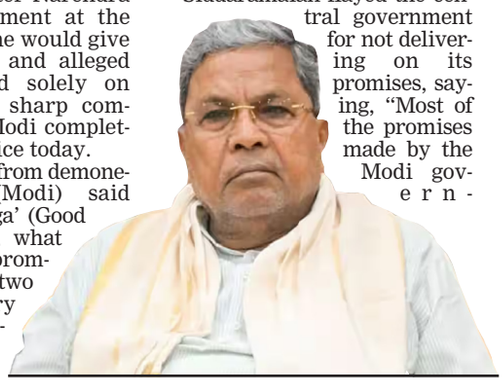
Bengaloreans witnessed rain in the City on Monday. IMD forecasted seven days of rain from Monday in the State ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

CM gives Modi 3.0 'zero marks' on 11th year

MYSURU, 9 JUNE

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday launched a scathing attack on the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre and said he would give it "zero marks" and alleged that it survived solely on "publicity". His sharp comments came as Modi completed 11 years in office today.

"Who benefited from demonetisation? He (Modi) said 'Achche Din ayega' (Good Days will come), what happened? He promised to provide two crore jobs every year? What happened to that? He also assured to resolve farmers' issues, what happened to that? Why did farmers protest for a year if their issues were being addressed?" he asked.



Siddaramaiah flayed the central government for not delivering on its promises, saying, "Most of the promises made by the Modi government were not fulfilled."

Accusing the Modi government of "creating false propaganda", he said, "The media gives him excessive publicity.... When our government announced guarantee schemes, they (BJP) claimed it couldn't be implemented and the State government would go bankrupt. But they copied the same schemes and implemented them in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi."

The CM recalled when Modi was Gujarat Chief Minister, he demanded 50 per cent devolution of taxes. "But what did he do after he became Prime Minister? and you (media) did not highlight all this". —*Salar News with agencies*

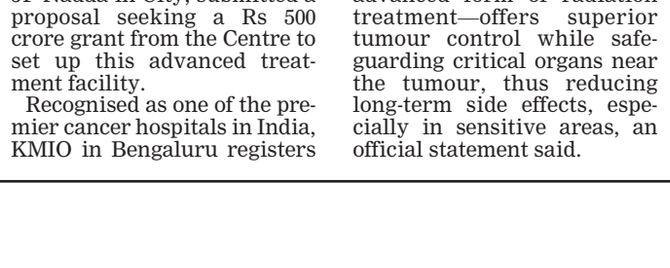
Bidar's 'miracle cure' of live fish swallowing is a huge hit again

BIDAR, 9 JUNE

Hundreds of people gathered on Sunday in Humnabad in Bidar district for the traditional practice of swallowing live fish. There is a centuries-old belief among the people that swallowing a live fish filled with Ayurvedic medicine on the day monsoon begins helps cure ailments such as cough, asthma, jaundice and respiratory issues.

This unique ritual has been followed in Bidar for hundreds of years. Once every year, patients travel from far and wide to participate in the ceremony. The Sharappa Jagadale family in Humnabad leads this tradition by inserting an Ayurvedic medicine into the mouth of a live fish and administering it to the patients. It is believed that as the medicine passes through the throat into the body, it helps reduce the symptoms of various illnesses.

One of the remarkable aspects of this tradition is that people of all ages — from young children to the elderly — participate. Live fish measuring one to four inches in length are swallowed whole with water. This occasion also proves to be a boom for local fish sellers. The price of a single small fish ranges from Rs 100 to Rs 200. Hoping for a cure, people buy the fish, swallow it along with the medicine, and return home with the hope of improved health. —*Salar News*



TREATS TO TORCH THEATRES

SC denies urgent hearing over threats against stalling 'Thug Life'

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The Supreme Court of India on Monday declined to grant an urgent hearing regarding a plea for protection amid reported threats surrounding the screening of Kamal Haasan's film 'Thug Life' in theatres across Karnataka.

A bench comprising Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra and Justice Manmohan instructed the Karnataka theatre association to seek recourse in the Karnataka High Court. The petitioner's lawyer highlighted that fringe groups had issued open threats against the screening, including claims that theatres would be set ablaze.

In response, Justice Mishra suggested, "Install fire extinguishers," and reiterated the need for the petitioner to approach the high court for redress.

'Thug Life,' which released nationwide on 5 June, has faced backlash in Karnataka following Haasan's comments regarding the Kannada language, which ignited significant controversy.

The film marks a reunion between the veteran actor and renowned filmmaker Mani Ratnam, their first collaboration since the iconic 1987 film 'Nayakan.'

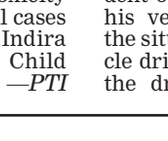
In addition to its Tamil release, 'Thug Life' is also available in Telugu, Hindi, and Malayalam. —*PTI*

Seven held in B'luru for killing 17-year-old girl

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

Seven individuals have been arrested and a minor boy from Bihar apprehended in connection with the murder of a 17-year-old girl whose body was discovered stuffed inside a suitcase on the outskirts of Bengaluru. The gruesome discovery was made near the railway tracks in Chandapura on 21 May.

Authorities report that the victim, originally from Bihar, had moved to Bengaluru just days earlier on 18 May after being lured into a relationship by Ashiq Kumar, a married factory worker with two children.



During interrogation, the accused claimed that a heated argument escalated into violence, resulting in the girl's death by strangulation at a relative's residence in Bommanahalli on the evening of 20 May.

After the murder, Kumar, along with accomplices, concealed the body in a suitcase and transported it in the car of one of the suspects, Mukesh, before abandoning it near the Chandapura railway bridge.

Following the incident, the group fled to Bihar but were later located and arrested by police. —*PTI*

SEEKS ₹500 CR FROM CENTRE

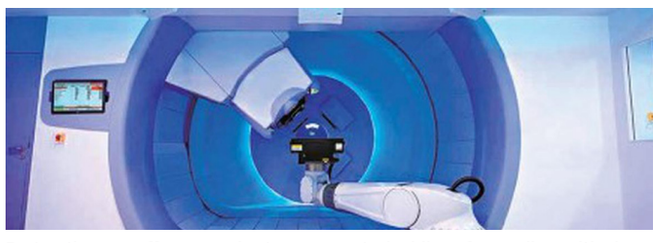
City vies for India's first govt proton therapy unit

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

The State Department of Medical Education on Monday announced its plan to establish the country's first government-run proton therapy facility for cancer treatment at Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO).

The move came after State Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development Sharan Prakash Patil, during a recent meeting with Union Health Minister JP Nadda in City, submitted a proposal seeking a Rs 500 crore grant from the Centre to set up this advanced treatment facility.

Recognised as one of the premier cancer hospitals in India, KMIO in Bengaluru registers over 21,000 new cancer cases annually.



Proton therapy offers superior tumour control while safeguarding critical organs near the tumour ***PHOTO: X***

Proton therapy—an advanced form of radiation treatment—offers superior tumour control while safeguarding critical organs near the tumour, thus reducing long-term side effects, especially in sensitive areas, an official statement said.

"Unlike conventional radio therapy that uses high-energy gamma rays or X-rays—which can impact healthy tissues beyond the tumour—proton therapy delivers precise, targeted doses with significantly reduced collateral damage," Patil stated in his proposal.

A statement issued by Patil's office stated that the proposal highlights the therapy's benefit in treating paediatric cancers, especially hereditary types like NF-1 and retinoblastoma, and a wide range of other malignancies including cancers of the eye, orbit, skull base, spine, liver, prostate, breast, head and neck, and paranasal sinuses.

It also holds promise for re-irradiation cases and unresectable tumours, it stated.

"It is estimated that over 1.2 lakh patients in India may require proton therapy by 2025. The facility at KMIO will not only provide cutting-edge cancer care with less toxicity but also support referral cases from NIMHANS and Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health," Patil added. —*PTI*

Savadi's car hits vehicle in Athani; no injuries

BELAGAVI, 9 JUNE

Former deputy chief minister Laxman Savadi's car collided with a goods carrier tempo near Darur in Athani taluk, Belagavi at around 4pm on Monday. No one was injured in the incident, sources said.

The Athani Congress legislator was travelling to Bengaluru when the mishap occurred. The incident occurred after he attended a quarterly progress review at meeting at the taluk panchayath office earlier in the day.

Savadi, soon after the accident occurred, got down from his vehicle and asked about the situation of the goods vehicle driver. After learning that the driver too was unhurt, Savadi continued his journey in another car.

However, it is unconfirmed whether he travelled all the way to the City by car or boarded a flight in Belagavi.

Savadi had served as the deputy chief minister under BJP's BS Yediyurappa from 2019 to 2021. — *Salar News*

- The legislator was travelling to Bengaluru when the mishap occurred. It occurred after he attended a quarterly progress review at meeting at the taluk panchayath office earlier in the day

Woman dies after house collapses in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA, 9 JUNE

A 30-year-old woman died after her house collapsed during heavy rains in Babanagar in the State's Vijayapura district on Monday. The incident occurred around 1.30am when the victim, Sangeeta, her husband, Balasaheb Patil and children had been sleeping. The deceased was stuck in a heap of mud and neighbours took the body out from the debris. Her husband and children sustained minor injuries and were treated at government hospital in Tikota. The police said that since the family's thatched house could not withstand the onslaught of heavy rains the previous night and collapsed under the impact. Several houses in the area were reportedly damaged due to rains the previous night. —*Salar News*

Chamarajanagar man eats 11 Ragi Mudde in challenge

MYSURU, 9 JUNE

A man, Kunna Nayaka has managed to make eyes roll by consuming 11 Ragi Mudde each weighing 250gms in 45 minutes in a Ragi balls challenge held at Palya village in Chamarajanagar district. The local youth organisation has organised this contest for men and women separately on 8 June. The participants were served 200 ragi balls and 30kg of Nati Koli chicken sambar as part of the upcoming Jatra festival. 18 men and five women participated in the competition. Nayaka stood first by eating a staggering 11 ragi balls, while Nagamalla Nayaka stood second by devouring nine balls along with chicken Sambar. Among the women, Madevamma stood first by consuming five Ragi Mudde. Kunna won a cash prize of Rs 5,000 along with shirts and panche. While Nagamalla won Rs 2,500 cash, shirt and panche, Madevamma won Rs 5,000 cash along with a saree. —*Salar News*

2 killed, 4 injured on Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway

MANDYA, 9 JUNE

Two people have been killed and four others injured in an accident on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway near Nidaghatta in Mandya district. The deceased were identified as Masood and Ayaan, aged between 25 and 30 years. The injured, Khushi, Chikku, Mujahid Pasha, Basavaraju, and Parvathi, were rushed to hospitals in Bengaluru and Mysuru for treatment. The accident occurred when the car in which the deceased had been traveling from Bengaluru lost control, crossed the central median and collided head-on with two vehicles coming from Mandya. The police have registered a case and investigation is underway to determine the accident's cause. The bodies were handed over to their families after autopsy —*Salar News*

2 youth drown in pond in Chamarajanagar

MYSURU, 9 JUNE

Two youths have drowned in a Krishihonda pond at Anegundi village in Hanur taluk of Chamarajanagar district on Monday. According to the police, the deceased were identified as Chamaraj, 25 and Akash, 22, of PG Palya village. The duo came from Bengaluru to their village for a housewarming ceremony organised by their families. They had gone for a swim at the pond located in the agriculture fields of their relative at Anegondi, when the incident occurred. A case was registered. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Explosives used without intimation prior to Yogi's visit

BAHRAICH, 9 JUNE

Two days ahead of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's proposed visit to Bahraich, a company authorised by the Union Petroleum Ministry allegedly used large quantity of explosives for drilling without informing local administration. Local BJP MLA Surveshvar Singh termed the incident a "serious security lapse," demanding cancellation of the chief minister's visit. Alpha Geo India Limited used ammonium nitrate explosives for the survey to trace oil and gas. 200 employees were brought to the Hardi Police Station to ensure their safety. 50-60 employees deployed on the field were questioned, though no one was detained. Singh urged Uttar Pradesh's principal secretary to cancel the Chief Minister's visit until the matter is resolved. *—PTI*

Espionage case: YouTuber's judicial custody extended

HISAR, 9 JUNE

A local court on Monday extended social media influencer Jyoti Malhotra, judicial custody by two weeks, fixing next hearing on 23 June. Malhotra was arrested on suspicion of espionage on 16 May and remanded her to five days of police custody. She was again remanded to judicial custody for 14 days. Malhotra, hailing from Hisar, ran a YouTube channel "Travel with JO". She was arrested and booked under provisions of Official Secrets Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Malhotra was reportedly in contact with some Pakistani Intelligence Operatives. She was in touch with Ehsan-ur-Rahim, Pakistani High Commission's staffer expelled by India and a Punjab-based YouTuber Jasbir Singh who was arrested on espionage charges. *—PTI*

Himachal man arrested for 'anti-India' post

NAHAN, 9 JUNE

A man, Suleman, was arrested in Himachal Pradesh's Paonta Sahib town for his social media posts that are alleged to be endangering India's sovereignty, unity, and integrity.

Locals in Paonta Sahib lodged a complaint against him alleging that he posted anti-India content, criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi over actions taken against Pakistan. His posts hurt religious feelings and he used anti-national language tantamount to serious acts of sedition, complaint added. A case was registered against Suleman, a fruit seller hailing from Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur, on 27 May based on the complaint. He had been absconding and was arrested on 8 June. *—PTI*

Cong alleges BJP attacked youth leader's family

AGARTALA, 9 JUNE

The Congress on Monday alleged that BJP workers have ransacked the house of its youth wing leader Sahajan Islam and beat up his family members in West Tripura district for allegedly criticising Chief Minister Manik Saha on social media. The BJP accused the youth Congress leader of making derogatory remarks against CM in a Facebook post and lodged an FIR against him. "Over 100 BJP and Yuva Morcha supporters armed with weapons entered the house of Sahajan at Shantipara on Sunday around 11pm and ransacked the property. His parents were beaten up and his wife was physically assaulted," Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee President Asish Kumar Saha told the reporters. As tension gripped the locality a strong contingent of police personnel rushed to spot and brought situation under control. *—PTI*

Cong flays BJP's 11 years as 'unfulfilling'

Cong says hunger and inequality rose during Modi 3.0 as PM refused to do 'unscripted' interviews

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI , 9 JUNE

The Congress on Monday released a booklet to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 11 years at the Centre, highlighting stagnated growth rate, rising hunger, and his "unfulfilled promises".

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh in a post on X said that the booklet, "11 Saal, Jhoothe Vikaas ke vade", commemorates "some of the biggest lies of this Government."

Addressing a press conference, AICC research department head Rajeev Gowda, who prepared the booklet, alleged, "This government is very good at fake news and propaganda. It is our job as the Opposition to get people to know this grim reality."

The booklet, "Ek Aur Baar Jumla Sarkar", he said, looks at the promises made by the BJP in its 2024 manifesto, and has since made.

The other one, he said, is "11 Saal Jhoote Vikaas Ke Vaade", which is a "detailed exposé" of the "hollow promises" of the BJP. He said that nearly a third of Indian children are suffering from malnutrition, even as the BJP insists on Viksit Bharat.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi PHOTO: X

The Congress leader also alleged that the Centre's claim that India added over 5,000 defence items to the indigenisation list was also not true.

He said India's growth is 6.5 per cent over the last year, which is the lowest rate after the COVID period.

Gowda said that at top universities, 5,000 teaching posts were vacant as of November 2024 and 35 per cent of faculty posts at AIIMS-Delhi and the new AIIMS had over 40 per cent faculty vacancy.

Additionally, the Congress on Monday stepped up its attack on PM Modi for not holding an "unscripted" press conference and asked why is he still "running away" or whether it is taking time to prepare the questions and answers and find suitable persons to query him in a "servile manner". *—PTI*

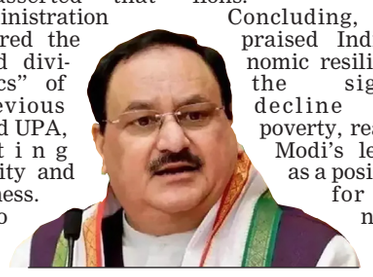
'Modi govt's works will be written in golden letters'

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

BJP President JP Nadda hailed the transformative achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on its 11th anniversary, stating it will be "written in golden letters."

He labelled opposition leader Rahul Gandhi as "irresponsible," accusing him of asking "baseless" questions regarding the government's foreign policy and military operations.

Nadda asserted that Modi's administration has countered the "scams and divisive politics" of the previous Congress-led UPA, promoting accountability and responsiveness.



He also expressed confidence in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) completing its term and enduring for another.

Highlighting key government initiatives such as the repeal of Article 370 and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Nadda emphasised Modi's commitment to confronting national challenges.

He dismissed accusations from Congress regarding the government's stability and pledged continuous welfare measures that have improved the lives of millions.

Concluding, Nadda praised India's economic resilience and the significant decline in poverty, reaffirming Modi's leadership as a positive force for the nation. *—PTI*

Rahul Gandhi urges EC to confirm data release date

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has commended the Election Commission's (EC) reported decision to share electoral roll data for Haryana and Maharashtra, describing it as "a good first step." He urged the EC to specify a date by which the data will be released in a digital, machine-readable format.

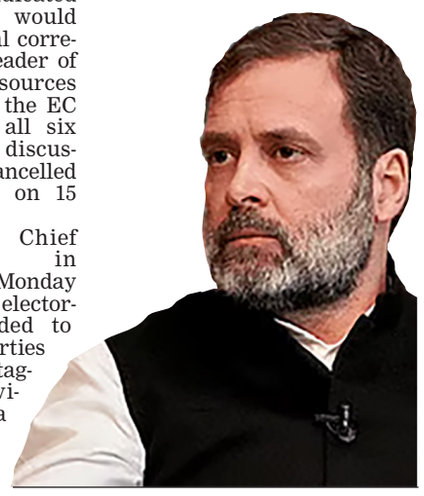
Gandhi's remarks came after media reports suggested that the EC had cleared the way for sharing electoral roll data spanning from 2009 to 2024, following an assurance given to the Delhi High Court earlier in the year. However, there has been no official confirmation from the EC about this development.

In a post on X, Gandhi stated, "Good first step taken by EC to hand over voter rolls," and asked, "Can the EC please announce the exact date by which this data will be handed over in a digital, machine-readable format?"

Following Gandhi's claims about rigging in the previous Maharashtra Assembly election, EC sources indicated that the commission would only respond to official correspondence from the leader of the opposition. The sources also noted that while the EC had reached out to all six national parties for discussions, Congress had cancelled a scheduled meeting on 15 May.

Meanwhile, the Chief Electoral Office in Maharashtra said on Monday that annually revised electoral rolls were provided to Congress and other parties at the draft and final stages in 2024 and on previous occasions under a participatory exercise.

The statement comes amid a row triggered by allegations of "match-fixing" in 2024 Maharashtra assembly elections raised by opposition leader Gandhi in a newspaper article. *—PTI*



Pak delegation arrives in UK after talks in US

ISLAMABAD, 9 JUNE

A high-level delegation from Pakistan, led by former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, has arrived in the UK after diplomatic engagements in New York concerning the military conflict with India. The nine-member group held discussions with United Nations representatives, diplomats from various member states, and senior US officials to convey Pakistan's perspective following the recent Pahalgam terror attack.

In retaliation, India targeted terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, prompting military clashes between the two nations.

Former Foreign Secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani expressed a clear message that Pakistan is committed to pursuing peace and seeks to resolve all issues, including the Indus Waters Treaty, through dialogue.

Lawmaker Khurram Dastgir emphasized the regional implications of the water dispute, insisting on the restoration of the 1960 treaty, which India claims is contingent on Pakistan halting support for cross-border terrorism. Dastgir warned that India's suspension of treaty poses a threat to livelihoods of 240 million people.

In the UK, the delegation plans to meet senior British officials, aiming to underscore Pakistan's stance on the conflict and its broader implications for regional stability. *—PTI*

CPI doesn't need RSS to teach it patriotism: Raja

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

D Raja, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI), has called on Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to clarify his understanding of Bharat Mata, following a controversy surrounding a portrait associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

The incident occurred during a World Environment Day event at the Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram, leading state Agriculture Minister P Prasad to boycott the programme.

Raja stated, "I do not know what the governor of Kerala understands about Bharat Mata or the tricolour... Our Bharat Mata is working in various sectors, including agriculture and the defence forces. Who is your Bharat Mata?"

He challenged the notion that the RSS has ownership over national symbolism, asserting that the CPI had played a significant role in India's independence struggle.

Raja emphasised that the CPI should not have to take lessons in patriotism from the BJP-RSS, questioning the latter's contributions during the freedom movement. *—PTI*

LOVE LANGUAGE

A 'Nihang' Sikh warrior offers water to a hawk, reflecting a powerful bond between tradition and nature, on a hot summer day, at heritage street near the Golden temple in Amritsar, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

2024 B'desh protester found in WB voter list

KOLKATA, 9 JUNE

A new political controversy has erupted in West Bengal following revelations that a participant in Bangladesh's August 2024 student protests is registered as a voter in Kakdwip. The individual, identified as Niutan Das, allegedly played a significant role in the protests that resulted in the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Despite presenting evidence of his Indian citizenship, including a PAN card and Aadhaar card, doubts surrounding Das's residency remain, as he claims to have voted in West Bengal since 2014 but did not clarify if he lives in India or Bangladesh. His cousin revealed that Das was "born in Bangladesh" and currently holds voting rights in both countries.

BJP has seized the opportunity to accuse the Trinamool Congress (TMC) of facilitating illegal immigration to manipulate electoral outcomes. TMC representatives have denied the allegations, attributing border security failures to the responsibility of the Centre and the Border Security Force.

As accusations continue to fly between the parties, calls for a thorough investigation into voter list integrity and illegal infiltration intensify ahead of the upcoming assembly elections. *—PTI*

OVER MEITEI LEADER'S ARREST

Protests continue overnight in Manipur

IMPHAL, 9 JUNE

Protesters took out torchlight processions overnight, burnt a government building and clashed with security forces, defying prohibitory orders as Manipur continued to witness demonstrations over the arrests of a Meitei organisation leader and four others, police said on Monday.

Clashes broke out between protesters and security personnel in Kwakeithel and Singjamei in Imphal West district, prompting the police to fire several rounds of tear gas shells and rubber bullets to disperse the agitators, an officer said.

The Sub-Divisional Collector (SDC) Office at Yairipok Tulihal in Imphal East district was set on fire, causing partial damage to the building, and official records were destroyed, he said.

The police have initiated an investigation to identify the culprits behind the arson, officer said.

Women's groups joined the protests and held torchlight processions in Khurai, demanding the immediate formation of a government in the state, which is now under the President's rule.

A road leading to Imphal is blocked by residents amid ongoing protests, near Imphal, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Additionally, Manipur Police on Monday said Ashem Kanan Singh, arrested by the CBI a day before, was a former head constable in state police and was terminated from service in March due to involvement in criminal activities.

The CBI arrested Singh, a member of Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol, on Sunday for his alleged involvement in various criminal activities related to the 2023 Manipur violence, officials said. *—PTI*

Journalist arrested over remarks against Amaravati

AMARAVATI/ HYDERABAD, 9 JUNE

Senior Telugu journalist Kommineni Srinivas Rao was arrested in Hyderabad on Monday for hosting a programme on a vernacular channel where a scribe allegedly made derogatory remarks against the greenfield capital city Amaravati, said a police official.

Guntur district Superintendent of Police S Satish confirmed that Thullur police from Amaravati have arrested the journalist.

VVR Krishna Raju, the journalist, who was also part of the programme, was accused of spewing venom against Amaravati and its women.

According to information shared by a source close to the TDP-led NDA government, the duo were booked under BNS Sections 79, 196 (1), 353 (2), 299, 356 (2) and 61 (1) and Section 67 of the IT Act, including Section (1) of the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act.

Meanwhile, YSRCP said that an FIR was registered against

Kommineni Srinivas Rao PHOTO: X

Rao four days ago in Thullur police station, accusing him of "failing to intervene during the broadcast", which featured those alleged vitriolic remarks.

Condemning the arrest, YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, called it a "political vendetta".

The former chief minister questioned the rationale behind punishing a moderator for remarks made by panelists during a televised debate, warning such actions endanger democratic discourse and press freedom. *—PTI*

66 Bangladeshis apprehended in Delhi

AGARTALA, 9 JUNE

Delhi police apprehended 66 bangladeshi nationals, including 20 men, 16 women and 30 children living illegally in the city The families, which had recently shifted from Haryana, concealed mobile phones and documents to avoid detection. Meanwhile, a Bangladeshi national and two Indian accomplices were detained at Agartala railway station on Sunday night. The Bangladeshi, identified as Jhil Mill (63) from Khulna, was arrested for entering India without valid documentation. The two Indian men, Sagar Mandal and Subrata Das from West Tripura, are accused of aiding Mill in illegally crossing the border, with plans to travel to New Delhi for medical treatment. *—PTI*

16 children rescued from Gujarat jewellery unit

RAJKOT, 9 JUNE

Sixteen children and five adults were rescued from makeshift imitation jewellery units in Gujarat's Rajkot, where they were allegedly coerced to work for long hours and subjected to physical abuse by the owner. The victims, all from West Bengal, were threatened and assaulted if they failed to work. Ajitmaula Ajmatmaula, the owner from Purba Bardhaman district, was arrested on 6 June. He faced multiple charges, including assault and unlawful labour, under various legal provisions, including the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The victims were being treated at a local childcare facility. Ajmatmaula allegedly enticed the victims to Rajkot with parental consent, promising a monthly wage of Rs 8,000. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Terror accused Rana allowed to contact family

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

A Delhi court has permitted Tahawwur Hussain Rana, accused of involvement in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, to make a phone call to his family. The court granted this reprieve for a single instance, with the call to be conducted in accordance with jail regulations. The Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman, currently in judicial custody, is expected to receive a health report within ten days. Rana, a close associate of key conspirator David Coleman Headley, was extradited from the US following the dismissal of his review plea by the US Supreme Court. He faces charges of conspiring with terrorist organisations, including Lashkar-e-Taiba and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami, in connection with the 2008 attacks that resulted in 166 fatalities during a three-day siege in Mumbai. *—PTI*

Gujarat HC receives hoax bomb threat

AHMEDABAD, 9 JUNE

The Gujarat High Court received a bomb threat via email on Monday, which was later confirmed to be a hoax after extensive security checks. The email, sent to the court's official address around 11.45am by an unknown individual, warned of an impending blast from an improvised explosive device scheduled for later that evening. Local police and six bomb detection and disposal teams conducted thorough inspections of the court premises, including all buildings and vehicles entering the site located in Ahmedabad. No suspicious items were discovered during the searches. The Chief Justice of the High Court decided to cancel the second session of court proceedings on Monday as a precautionary measure. *—PTI*

'Something hit our train coach'

Mumbai train passengers fell as they hung from 2 trains that brushed against each other

MUMBAI/THANE, 9 JUNE

An eyewitness to the horrific suburban railway mishap in Maharashtra's Thane district on Monday morning said the chain of events began after someone in the coach ahead of his either fell after hitting a wall or "something hit our compartment".

At least four commuters, including a GRP constable, died and six were injured after falling off a moving and overcrowded local train in Maharashtra's Thane district during rush hour.

The incident occurred between Diva and Kopar railway stations when the train was going towards Kasara.

The passengers fell probably after commuters hanging from the footboard of two overcrowded trains and their backpacks brushed against each other as the trains passed in opposite directions, railway officials said.

Police personnel at the Mumbra Railway Station after several passengers reportedly fell from a moving train, resulting in four deaths and multiple injuries, in Thane on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

Family members of a victim, who died after falling from an overcrowded train in Mumbai mourn at Thane Civil Hospital *PHOTO: PTI*

This eyewitness, a Bhiwandi resident, had boarded the Kasara-CSMT train at Kalyan station.

"The incident happened when the train reached Mumbra station. Someone from the coach ahead of ours fell off after hitting a wall or something hit our coach. At that time, three-four people from our coach fell down and some from other coaches also fell. I think 7-8 persons lost balance and fell onto the tracks," he said.

His friend Rehan Shaikh, 26, who had been coming from Kalyan to Thane, was injured in the accident.

In the morning, the passenger flow in Mumbai's suburban network is towards the south of the metropolis where a majority of the offices are located. The flow reverses in the evening as people start leaving for home towards Thane and beyond on the Central Railway network and Andheri and beyond on Western Railway.

Th rush hours in the network are among the densest in the world *—PTI*

163 Covid variant XFG cases detected in India: INSACOG

NEW DELHI/ BHUBANESWAR/ KOLKATA/GUWAHATI, 9 JUNE

About 163 cases of the newly emerging Covid-19 variant XFG have been detected in India so far, according to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG) data.

The recombinant XFG variant harbours four key spike mutations and rapidly spreaded globally following its initial detection in Canada.

The XFG variant has been found in a total of 163 samples, with the highest of 89 in Maharashtra, 16 in Tamil Nadu, 15 in Kerala, 11 in Gujarat and six each in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

159 samples were detected with this variant in May, followed by two each in June and April.

India's has over 6,000 active cases, with 769 added in the last 48 hours.

Odisha reported four more Covid-19 cases.

So far, 15 patients have recovered from the infection and the total active cases stand at 34.

The health department advised people with Covid-like symptoms to not visit Puri during the Rath Yatra scheduled for 27 June.

Odhisa School and Mass Education Minister, Nityananda Gond had informed that schools will function adhering to Covid-19 preventive measures when classes resume on 20 June after the summer vacation.

West Bengal reported 54 fresh cases of Covid-19, taking the total number of active cases to 747.

53 patients have recovered so far. The death toll stands at one. Assam's active Covid-19 case count declined to six as two more persons recovered from the disease in the last 24 hours. *—PTI*

SC stays toll on Madurai to Tuticorin NH

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed in the interim an order restraining the National Highways Authority of India from collecting toll on the Madurai-Tuticorin national highway.

A bench comprising Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Manmohan issued notice to V Balakrishnan, a retired Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation assistant executive engineer from Tuticorin district, on whose plea the Madras High Court passed the order.

The direction came after additional solicitor general N Venkataraman, appearing for the NHAI, sought a stay. *—PTI*

Singapore-flagged ship on fire off Kerala, 4 missing

KOCHI, 9 JUNE

A fire was reported on board a Singapore-flagged container ship off the coast of Kerala on Monday, with the crew having been rescued.

Of the 22 crew members on board the ship, MV Wan Hai 503, 18 abandoned the vessel and are being rescued by Indian Navy and Coast Guard assets.

The Indian Coast Guard ships Sachet, Arnvesh, Samudra Prahari, Abhinav, Rajdoot, and C-144 were involved in the ongoing rescue operation.

The underdeck fire was first intimated at around 10.30am by the Maritime Operations Centre in Mumbai to their counterparts in Kochi.

The 270-metre-long vessel was en route to Mumbai.

".....MOC (Koc) received an information from MOC (Mbi) about a reported underdeck fire onboard MV Wan Hai 503. The vessel is a Singapore Flag Container ship, 270 m long and.....," a defence PRO statement read.

Thick black smoke billows from Singapore-flagged container vessel MV WAN HAI 1503 following an explosion off Kerala coast *PHOTO: PTI*

The Indian Navy diverted INS Surat, which had been scheduled to dock in Kochi, to provide immediate assistance.

The Western Naval Command redirected the vessel at 11am.

A Navy Dornier aircraft sortie was being planned from the naval air station INS Garuda in Kochi to assess the situation and coordinate support. *—PTI*

Illegal sand mining: 2 MP scribes get SC relief

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Monday protected in the interim two Madhya Pradesh-based journalists who were allegedly assaulted by the state police for reporting on illegal sand mining activities.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Manmohan refused to examine their plea but them to move the MP High Court instead.

A separate top court bench on 4 June sought the responses of Madhya Pradesh and Delhi governments on the plea of Shashikant Jatav and Amarkant Singh Chouhan.

"We are not entertaining the plea. However, looking at the allegations, we permit the petitioners to move the concerned high court within two weeks from today. Till the time the petitioners move high court ...the petitioners shall not be arrested," Justice Mishra said.

The journalists alleged that they were kidnapped, assaulted in custody and subjected to caste-based slurs by a senior police officer and his subordinates. The court had asked why the petitioners did not make the superintendent of police of Bhind a party to the petition.

"It is very easy to say all kinds of things against an IPS officer without making him a party" it added. *—PTI*

Cop dies, 2 injured in Ch'garh blast

SUKMA, 9 JUNE

An Additional Superintendent of Police was tragically killed and two other officers injured in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast carried out by Naxalites in Sukma district, Chhattisgarh, on Monday. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed deep sorrow over the death of Akash Rao Girepunje, a 2013-batch state police officer, emphasising that the Naxalites would face the consequences for such acts.

The attack occurred near Dondra village on the Konta-Errabor road while Girepunje and his team were patrolling the area following reports of an earth-mover machine being torched by Naxalites. As they arrived, an IED detonated, severely injuring Girepunje and two other officers: Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Bhanupratap Chandrakar and Station House Officer Inspector Sonal Gwala.

Akash Rao Girepunje *PHOTO: PTI*

Girepunje, 42, succumbed to his injuries after being taken to hospital, while the other two officers were reported to be out of danger and were being airlifted to Raipur for further treatment.

In a heartfelt tribute, CM Sai saluted Girepunje's martyrdom and recognised his bravery in combating Naxal violence. Both Sai and Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma urged Naxalites to abandon violence and assimilate into society, stressing that the government seeks peaceful resolution rather than confrontation. *—PTI*

2.6 LAKH PEOPLE REEL UNDER ASSAM FLOOD

GUWAHATI, 9 JUNE

The flood situation in Assam remained critical with around 2.6 lakh people in six districts still suffering from the deluge on Monday, even as the water levels receded in many parts of the state.

The floodwaters continued to recede in almost all inundated areas, with most parts of the state not witnessing any rain in the last 24 hours. Three more people lost their lives in Kamrup district, and around 2.6 lakh people have been affected in six districts.

The body of an army man, one of the six people who had gone missing after a landslide at Sikkim's Chaten was recovered on Monday in Mangan district. He was identified as Sainuddhin PK. *—PTI*

Villagers use a boat to travel at a flood-affected area, at Chanaka village, in Morigaon district, Assam, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

LOVE GONE WRONG

Wife made hitmen kill husband on Meghalaya honeymoon

Indoor woman Sonam Raghuvanshi, accused of plotting her husband's murder during their honeymoon in Meghalaya *PHOTO: PTI*

SHILLONG/LUCKNOW, 9 JUNE

Indore tourist Raja Raghuvanshi was allegedly killed by men, hired by his wife during their honeymoon in Meghalaya.

The wife, Sonam, surrendered before the Nandganj Police Station in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur, while four other assailants were arrested.

They were identified as Akash Rajput, 19, from Uttar Pradesh's Lalitpur, Vishal Singh Chauhan, 22 and Raj Singh Khushwaha, 21, both from Madhya Pradesh's Indore and Anand Kurmi, 23, from Madhya Pradesh's Sadar district.

Reports emerged of Sonam's affair with Khuswaha, also her father's employee, to be the reason behind the murder. Raja and his wife went missing while vacationing in Sohra in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district on 23 May. His body was found in a gorge on 2 June, while a search for his wife was underway. A blood stained machete and a raincoat similar to the one used by the couple were also discovered.

The accused Raj Kushwaha, Vishal Chauhan, Akash Rajput *PHOTO: PTI*

The accused reportedly revealed that the wife had hired them to kill Raja

Madhya Pradesh police are on the lookout of more persons involved in the crime.

Sonam was reportedly found at Kashi Dhaba situated on the Varanasi-Ghazipur main road. After being sent to Sadar Hospital for initial treatment, she was sent to a one-stop centre providing assistance to distressed women.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had requested Union Home Minister Amit Shah to order a CBI probe into the case.

The couple left for their honeymoon in Meghalaya on 20 May after their marriage on 11 May.

Sonam's father, Devi Singh Raghuvanshi claimed that his daughter was innocent and that the Meghalaya police lacked evidence that her daughter had hired contract killers to kill her husband.

He also refuted claims of Sonam having an affair with Kushwaha.

Raja's mother, Uma Raghuvanshi claimed Sonam had planned Meghalaya trip, but had not book the return tickets. She said Sonam did not prefer spending time with her husband before marriage as she hailed from an orthodox family. *—PTI*

WORLD'S LARGEST CONTAINER SHIP

World's largest container ship by capacity, the MSC IRINA, arrived at the Vizhinjam International Seaport here on Monday morning, port officials said. The vessel is expected to remain berthed until Tuesday. It has a carrying capacity of 24,346 twenty-foot equivalent units. The massive ship is a striking symbol of the growing scale of global trade and India's rising role in it

PHOTO: PTI

Heat singes India, but noone knows how many

Laborers sleep by the side of a road on a hot night in Lucknow ***PHOTO: PTI***

On a scorching May afternoon last year, a rag-picker in Delhi's Ghazipur area collapsed from heat exhaustion.

"The family rushed him to the hospital," says Majida Begum, a sanitation worker who witnessed it. "But he was declared dead on arrival. They had no proof that he died due to heat, so they were not given any compensation."

His death was never officially counted, just one of the countless lives lost in India's intensifying heatwaves that go unrecorded and uncompensated.

An investigation by PTI reveals that disjointed, outdated reporting systems are obscuring the true toll, weakening both public awareness and policy action.

Accurate data on heat-related deaths helps identify who is most at risk.

Without it, the government cannot plan effectively, create targeted policies or take timely action to save lives.

But behind the missing numbers are real people, many poor and undocumented, whose deaths routinely slip through the cracks of India's incoherent reporting system.

Currently, at least three separate datasets attempt to monitor heatstroke or heat-related deaths. The two most-commonly cited in the media are maintained by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the health ministry and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the home ministry.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) also carries figures on deaths caused by "heatwaves" in its annual reports, drawing data primarily from media coverage.

However, these three sources report widely-varying numbers.

For instance, data obtained through an RTI query from the health ministry shows 3,812 heat-related deaths recorded between 2015 and 2022 under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), managed by the NCDC.

In contrast, NCRB figures, cited in Parliament many times by Union Earth Sciences Minister Jitendra Singh, put the number at 8,171 deaths from "heat/sunstroke" during the same period.

Meanwhile, the IMD's annual reports record 3,436 deaths due to "heatwave" between 2015 and 2022.

While the NCDC and the IMD have already released the figures for 2023 and 2024, the NCRB is yet to publish the data for these years.

Since 2015, the health ministry has been collecting data on heat illness and deaths from April to July. In 2019, this was extended to March through July, covering 23 states.

The NCRB has recorded heatstroke deaths since 1995, listing them as "accidental deaths from forces of nature" since around 2010.

PTI spoke to government officials and healthcare-policy experts to understand the large discrepancies between these datasets.

Such bodies are taken to hospitals where doctors conduct autopsies to determine the cause of death.

According to the NCRB, 730 people died from "heat/sunstroke" in 2022, 374 in 2021 and 530 in 2020.

By contrast, the NCDC data shows just 33 heat-related deaths in 2022, none in 2021 and four in 2020, as many states failed to report their figures.

These states included Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

A Health Ministry official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the data from the NCRB and the NCDC are "not directly comparable" because they originate from different sources.

He acknowledged the existence of multiple datasets on heat deaths in India and noted that "none of those alone gives the full picture".

The official said surveillance systems often capture only a fraction of actual cases for other communicable and non-communicable diseases.

One major challenge in data collection is the absence of an electronic record system.

Though the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) enables digital submission of surveillance data like that of heat-related deaths, the hospital staff manually enter the information into online forms. There is no automated data transfer from hospital records.

The doctor also alleged that authorities may suppress death figures to avoid compensation liabilities.

At the India Heat Summit 2025 in May, health ministry Advisor Soumya Swaminathan highlighted the weaknesses in the country's death-reporting systems.

Abhiyant Tiwari, Lead for Climate Resilience and Health at NRDC India, said attributing deaths directly to heat remains a global challenge, not just in India.

Tiwari, who has contributed to heat action plans at city and district levels, said the all-cause mortality data is more reliable for assessing vulnerability and setting early-warning thresholds, as it captures the total number of deaths during heat events, not only those officially classified as heatstroke deaths.

Many heat-related deaths go unrecorded or are misclassified as heart attacks or other causes. By comparing mortality during heatwaves to normal periods, experts estimate that the excess deaths are likely attributable to extreme heat, he said.

As climate change intensifies heatwaves, Avinash Chanchal, deputy programme director at Greenpeace South Asia, called for urgent reforms in how heat-related deaths are

SALAR سالار

Bitcoin introduced into Africa's largest slum

Dotting the roadside in what is widely considered Africa's largest urban slum are typical stands selling vegetables. What isn't typical is their acceptance of bitcoin as a form of payment.

Around 200 people use bitcoin in Soweto West, a neighbourhood of the Kibera slum in Kenya's capital. It's part of an initiative to extend financial services to one of the country's poorest and most under-banked areas.

Its promoters say the adoption of crypto fits with the ideals of bitcoin as an accessible, democratic technology — but experts say it also has major risks.

Bitcoin came to Soweto West via AfriBit Africa, a Kenyan fintech company, through its nonprofit initiative to improve financial inclusion.

"In many cases, people in Kibera do not have an opportunity to secure their lives with normal savings," said AfriBit Africa co-founder Ronnie Mdawida, a former community worker.

With bitcoin, "they do not need documentation to have a bank account … that gives them the foundation for financial freedom".

Bitcoin, the first and largest crypto, was created in 2009 in the wake of the global financial crisis as a decentralised digital asset that could act as an alternative method of payment.

The asset has found more popular use as a store of value, like a digital form of gold. Bitcoin has attracted enthusiastic supporters as prices have climbed almost 1,000 per cent in the last five years. But its volatility and lack of regulation are concerns.

AfriBit Africa introduced bitcoin into Soweto West in early 2022 through crypto-denominated grants to local garbage collectors, who are often funded by nonprofits. The groups are made up of dozens of young people, who Mdawida says are more likely to be open to new tech.

After gathering on a Sunday to collect trash, garbage collectors are paid a few dollars' worth of bitcoin. AfriBit Africa estimates that it has put some USD 10,000 into the community, with garbage collectors acting as the main agents of spreading bitcoin in Soweto West. In Kibera, many people earn about a dollar a day.

Now a small number of other residents hold bitcoin, and some merchants and motorcycle taxis accept payments in crypto.

Damiano Magak, 23, a garbage collector and food seller, said he prefers bitcoin to M-PESA, the ubiquitous mobile money platform in Kenya, because M-PESA transaction costs are higher and the network can be slower.

There are no fees for M-PESA transactions between individuals or businesses up to 100 78 cents, but after that the fees increase with transaction size. Fees for the Lightning bitcoin network where transactions take place are free if people use a platform that AfriBit Africa introduced into the community.

Onesmus Many, 30, another garbage collector, said he feels safer with his money in a bitcoin wallet instead of in cash because of crime.

Some merchants have found benefits to accepting crypto, including Dotea Anyim. She said around 10 per cent of customers at her vegetable stand pay in bitcoin.

The possibility that crypto prices could keep rising also appeals to residents of Soweto West. Magak and Many said they now have around 70 per cent to 80 per cent of their net worth in bitcoin, a far higher level of exposure than most people.

"It is my worth and I'm risking it in bitcoin," Magak said.

That concerns Ali Hussein Kassim, a fintech entrepreneur and chair of the FinTech Alliance in Kenya.

Kassim acknowledged the potential benefits that digital assets could bring, particularly in facilitating cheaper cross-border payments like remittances, but failed to see the benefit in Kibera.

Bitcoin's volatility could negate the benefits of cheaper transaction fees, Kassim said, and bitcoin does not have the same protections as other financial services due to a lack of regulation.

Mdawida disagreed, calling bitcoin's unregulated nature a benefit.

"We don't shy away from the risks involved," the AfriBit Africa co-founder said, noting the group's investments in bitcoin education in Kibera, including financial literacy training and crypto courses in the community.

Efforts to introduce bitcoin into developing countries have faced challenges. Bitcoin was adopted as legal tender in El Salvador and Central African Republic but both countries have reversed their decision.

In Kenya, the digital asset sector has faced legal and regulatory challenges, including crackdowns on cryptocurrency giveaways. This small project, focusing only on Soweto West, has been allowed.

"On my phone I put notifications on when bitcoin rises … and it's all smiles," Magak said. "Whenever it fluctuates up and down, I know at the end of the day it will just rise." *—PTI*

Bitcoin technology at the outskirts of Kibera Slums in Nairobi4 ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

LETTERS

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Musk, Trump drama is entertaining, but how did things go down,

A no-holds-barred and very public blow-up between the world's richest man and the President of the United States has had social media agog in recent days, with each making serious accusations against the other.

And while tech billionaire Elon Musk appears to have cooled the spat somewhat – deleting some of his more incendiary social media posts about Donald Trump – the president still appears to be in no mood to make up, warning Musk of "very serious consequences" if he backs Democrats at the mid-term elections in 2026.

Tensions erupted over Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill" (OBBB). The OBBB proposes extensive tax cuts which could add roughly USD 3 trillion to the US national debt.

After stepping down from his role as advisor to Trump, Musk criticised the OBBB as "disgusting abomination" that would "burden America citizens with crushing unsustainable debt".

Trump returned fire, suggesting "Elon was 'wearing thin', I asked him to leave […] and he just went CRAZY!".

In a dramatic escalation, Musk responded by calling for Trump's impeachment.

Musk also tweeted allegations that Trump was implicated in the Epstein files related to child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. He has since deleted those tweets.

Why has the much-hyped "bromance" between Musk and Trump suddenly ended? And what was the basis of their alliance in the first place?

Like many billionaires, Musk had previously been hesitant to get involved in frontline politics.

In early 2024, Musk was still claiming to be politically non-aligned, suggesting he would not donate to either presidential campaign.

This apparent neutrality ended following the attempted assassination of Trump at a July 2024 campaign rally, with Musk immediately endorsing Trump.

In reality, Musk's conversion to the MAGA movement long predated the assassination attempt. Musk's hyperactive Twitter/X account shows a steady radicalisation.

Across 2020-2024, Musk engaged with accounts sharing MAGA and far-right conspiracy theories.

Musk's posts also show the obsession with opposing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies characteristic of the MAGA movement.

After endorsing Trump, Musk spent USD 288 million supporting Trump's election and appeared at campaign events around the country.

Trump and Musk ***PHOTO: X***

Musk's support for Trump was both ideological and pragmatic.

From tax cuts to immigration restrictions to opposing DEI, there were clearly many ideological commonalities between Musk and Trump.

There were also clear practical benefits for both men. Trump gained the financial backing of the world's wealthiest man. Musk gained not only unparalleled access to the US President, but also a role leading the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

Early reporting on the second Trump presidency noted the omnipresence of Musk, who at one point moved into Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort to be close to the President.

In the early months of the Trump administration, Musk cut government programmes and employees at a remarkable rate. The USAID programme was particularly hard hit, as were the Department of Education and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

As the spending cuts picked up pace, Musk began to attract more controversy.

Critics questioned the apparent power wielded by the unelected billionaire.

Musk's apparent rampage through government did not last long. As Trump's executive appointees assumed control of their departments, Musk and DOGE experienced increasing resistance. After a series of fractious cabinet meetings, Trump reportedly reduced the power of DOGE in March.

On 1 May, Musk announced he would be leaving DOGE, claiming the department had saved the government USD 180 billion in spending. This number is likely an exaggeration, but still falls well short of his original target.

Musk has learned a harsh lesson in politics – that the complexities of government resist simple reform and cannot be easily rolled back in the way a CEO might slim down a company.

For Trump, his manoeuvring of Musk appears to be another smart political move.

As the public face of DOGE, Musk bore the negative rap for early government cuts and chaos. Having used his money and reputation, Trump dispensed with Musk as he has with so many advisers and appointees before.

Trump has used and discarded many other powerful figures in his chaotic political career. Musk has more power than most, and might be able to strike back at Trump.

Yet, with his public reputation and brands already tarnished, Musk would be ill-advised to pick further fights with Trump and his adoring MAGA movement.

Accordingly, Musk has indicated over the weekend he is open to a détente. Tesla investors will no doubt be relieved if Musk makes good on his pledge to step back from politics and return to his businesses.

More concerning are the prospects for democracy. With wealth and power continuing to concentrate in a handful of billionaires, voters appear reduced to the role of viewers forced to watch the reality TV drama unfold.

Though Trump appears to have won this round of billionaire battle royale, whatever happens next, democracy is the real loser. *—PTI*

US deports 37 Nepalese in largest single-day op

KATHMANDU, 9 JUNE

The United States government has deported 37 Nepali nationals for illegally residing in the country, marking the largest number returned in a single day. A chartered flight arrived at Tribhuvan International Airport on Sunday evening, as confirmed by an official from the Immigration Department. All individuals deported were found to be in violation of US immigration laws. Anjan Neupane, a spokesperson for the Immigration Office, reported that since President Donald Trump took office in January, 177 Nepali nationals have been repatriated under similar circumstances. In recent years, hundreds of Nepalese have sought to enter the US illegally, often paying substantial sums to brokers and exposing themselves to significant risks. *—PTI*

Explosion at US base in Japan injures 4 soldiers

TOKYO, 9 JUNE

An explosion at a storage site for unexploded ordnance on a US military base in Okinawa has left four Japanese soldiers injured, although their injuries are not life-threatening. The incident occurred when the soldiers were inspecting unexploded ordnance at a facility managed by the Okinawa prefectural government, located within the munitions storage area of Kadena Air Base. As the soldiers attempted to remove rust to examine the ordnance, one device exploded. Local officials confirmed that the injured soldiers sustained finger injuries. Okinawa, site of one of World War II's bloodiest battles, continues to uncover hundreds of tons of unexploded bombs from the war, with approximately 1,856 tons believed to remain on the island. *—PTI*

Multiple Waymo taxis burn in Los Angeles on Sunday amid anti-ICE protests *PHOTO: PTI*

LOS ANGELES BURNS

Anti-ICE protesters clash with National Guard

LOS ANGELES, 9 JUNE

Tensions in Los Angeles escalated on Sunday as thousands of protesters took to the streets in response to President Donald Trump's extraordinary deployment of the National Guard. Protesters blocked a major freeway and set self-driving cars on fire while law enforcement used tear gas, rubber bullets and flash bangs to control the crowd.

Sunday's protests in Los Angeles, a sprawling city of 4 million people, were centred in several blocks of downtown. It was the third and most intense day of demonstrations against Trump's immigration crackdown in the region, as the arrival of around 300 National Guard troops spurred anger and fear among residents.

The Guard was deployed specifically to protect Federal buildings, including the downtown detention centre where protesters concentrated. The protests began Friday when Federal agents arrested immigrants in LA's fashion district, in a Home Depot parking lot.

Several dozen people were arrested throughout the weekend of protest. One was detained Sunday for throwing a Molotov cocktail at police, and another for ramming a motorcycle into a line of officers.

Starting in the morning, the troops stood shoulder to shoulder, carrying long guns and riot shields as protesters shouted "shame" and "go home".

Minutes later, the Los Angeles Police Department fired rounds of crowd-control munitions to disperse the protesters, who they said were assembled unlawfully.

Democrat Governor Gavin Newsom requested Trump remove the guard members in a letter Sunday afternoon, calling their deployment a "serious breach of state sovereignty".

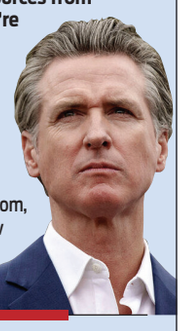
Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass blamed the increasingly aggressive protests on Trump's decision to deploy the Guard, calling it a move designed to enflame tensions. They've both urged protesters to remain peaceful.

Newsom, a Democrat, told MSNBC that he plans to file a suit on Monday against the Trump administration to roll back the National Guard deployment, which he called "an illegal act, an immoral act, an unconstitutional act." *—PTI*

A police officer fires a soft round near the metropolitan detention center of downtown Los Angeles on Sunday, following Saturday night's immigration raid protest *PHOTO: PTI*

We didn't have a problem until Trump got involved. This (deploying National Guard) is a serious breach of state sovereignty — inflaming tensions while pulling resources from where they're actually needed.... These are the acts of a dictator, not a President

—Gavin Newsom, California Guv



Guv Gavin Newscum and 'Mayor' Karen Bass should apologise to the people of LA for the absolutely horrible job that they have done, and this now includes the ongoing riots. These are not protesters, they are trouble-makers and insurrectionists

—Donald Trump, US President

What to know about deploying the National Guard

Trump's deployment of the National Guard appeared to be the first time in decades that a state's national guard was activated without a request from its Governor. The last time this was done was in 1965, when President Lyndon B Johnson sent troops to protect a civil rights march in Alabama. Trump was able to go over Governor Gavin Newsom by Federalising the troops, under the Title 10 Authority, which places the President, not the Governor atop the chain of command.

Russia launches heaviest drone attack on Ukraine

KYIV, 9 JUNE

Russia launched 479 drones at Ukraine in the war's biggest overnight drone bombardment, the Ukrainian air force said on Monday.

Apart from drones, 20 missiles of various types were fired at different parts of Ukraine, according to the air force, which said the barrage targeted mainly central and western areas of Ukraine.

Ukraine's air defences destroyed 277 drones and 19 missiles in mid-flight, an air force statement said, claiming that only 10 drones or missiles hit their target. It was not possible to independently verify the claim.

Russia's aerial attacks usually start late in the evening and end in the morning, because drones are harder to spot in the dark.

Russia says it targets only military targets, but has battered civilian areas of Ukraine with drones during the more than three-year war. The attacks have killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, said the United Nations.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte is planning to suggest a four-fold increase in the military alliance's air and missile defences to counter the threat from Russia, according to extracts released before Rutte's speech in London on Monday.

Rutte is due to meet UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer ahead of a NATO summit in the Netherlands. *—PTI*

Fire and smoke rise from the site where a Russian missile struck in a residential area in Kharkiv, Ukraine on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Italians vote on citizenship, labour on the second day

ROME, 9 JUNE

Italians voted on the second day of referendums aimed at easing citizenship for children born to foreign parents and enhancing job protections. Initial turnout was a stark 22.7 per cent, far below the required 50 per cent plus one threshold, jeopardising the validity of the vote.

Proponents argue that the proposed changes could benefit around 2.5 million foreign nationals, fostering integration for second-generation Italians. The reforms have been championed by Italy's main unions and left-wing parties. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni faced criticism for attending the polls but not voting, seen as a subtle endorsement of abstention by her coalition.

Activists highlighted the difficulties foreign-born children face in obtaining residency, underscoring the lack of public discourse on these crucial issues. A complaint by Italy's AGCOM communications authority over insufficient media coverage underscores the challenge of raising awareness. Amid declining engagement, some analysts suggest reconsidering the referendum process itself, advocating for a lowered turnout threshold. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

'Purpose' declared best new play at Tony Awards

NEW YORK, 9 JUNE

The best new play trophy at Sunday's Tony Awards went to 'Purpose,' Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' drawing-room drama about an accomplished Black family exposing hypocrisy and pressures during a snowed-in gathering. Jacobs-Jenkins becomes the first Black playwright to win for best new play since August Wilson got the trophy in 1987 for 'Fences.' Kara Young — the first Black female actor to be nominated for a Tony Award in four consecutive years — became the first Black person to win two Tonys consecutively with the featured actress in a play trophy for her work in 'Purpose.' It caps a remarkable year for Jacobs-Jenkins. *—PTI*

Colombian Sen critical post shooting at rally

BOGOTA, 9 JUNE

Colombian Senator Miguel Uribe Turbay, a Conservative Presidential hopeful, was in serious condition Sunday following surgery for a gunshot wound at a political rally a day earlier, Bogota's Mayor said. Mayor Carlos Galan visited the Fundacinn Santa Fe clinic to express solidarity with the family of the 39-year-old senator. "He survived the procedure; these are critical moments and hours for his survival," Galan said on Sunday morning after receiving information from the medical staff at the clinic. The hospital said on Sunday that Turbay was recovering in intensive care after undergoing neurosurgery and a procedure on his left thigh. His condition was described as "extremely serious", and his prognosis was reserved. The attack took place in a park at Fontibon in Bogota when armed assailants shot him. *—PTI*

Kabul faces severe water crisis, finds Mercy Corps

According to a report by NGO Mercy Corps, Kabul could become the first modern city to completely run out of water by 2030 *PHOTO: X*

KABUL, 9 JUNE

Mercy Corps has warned of a severe water crisis in Kabul, where seven million residents risk running dry by 2030 if urgent action is not taken, Khaama Press reported.

Over the past decade, Kabul's groundwater levels have dropped by up to 30 meters due to rapid population growth and climate change, with half of the city's deep wells drying up, it said, quoting Dayne Curry, Mercy Corps' Afghanistan director.

"The absence of water means communities will be forced to leave. Without intervention, large-scale migration and increased hardship will follow for the people of Afghanistan," he was quoted as saying.

Water extraction far exceeds the country's natural replenishment rates, it said.

1M AFGHANS LEFT PAK

More than 1.055 million Afghan citizens have returned from Pakistan in the past eight months, marking an unprecedented trend in recent years, Tolo News reported quoting the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The UNHCR's Assistant Communications Officer Faramarz Barzin said, "From 1 October, 2023, to May 31, 2025, more than 1.055 million people have returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan. *—ANI*

US, China to hold trade talks in London

LONDON, 9 JUNE

High-level delegations from the United States and China are meeting in London on Monday to try and shore up a fragile truce in a trade dispute that has roiled the global economy.

A Chinese delegation led by Vice Premier He Lifeng is due to meet US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer at an undisclosed location in the city.

The talks due to last at least a day, follow negotiations in Geneva last month that brought a temporary respite in the trade war. The two countries announced 12 May they had agreed to a 90-day suspension of most of the 100 per cent-plus tariffs they had imposed on each other in an escalating trade war that had sparked fears of recession.

Since then, the US and China have exchanged angry words over advanced semiconductors that power artificial intelligence, "rare earths" that are vital to carmakers and other industries, and visas for Chinese students at American universities.

US President Donald Trump then spoke at length with Chinese leader Xi Jinping by phone last Thursday in an attempt to put relations back on track. Trump announced on social media the next day that trade talks would be held on Monday in London. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

35% fall in China's exports to the US in May, from a year earlier.

4.8% rise in China's total exports in May, slowing from an 8.1% year-on-year increase in April.

3.4% decline in imports year-on-year.

$103.2 billion trade surplus of.

US reintroduces Drones for First Responders Act to counter China

Washington, 9 June

The US reintroduced the Drones for First Responders Act in an attempt in an attempt to move away from its reliance on Chinese made drones. The lawmakers of the committee said "the Chinese Communist Party is a clear and present threat to our national security and relying on their drones for our first responders is not only dangerous, but unacceptable". They said legislation benefits the US drone industry, decreases reliance on foreign opponents, and promotes US national security. Currently, 90 per cent of the drones utilised by American first responders are manufactured in China. *—ANI*

BID TO BREAK BLOCKADE ON PALESTINE

Israel calls activist Thunberg's voyage a 'selfie yacht of celebrities'

JERUSALEM, 9 JUNE

Israel's Foreign Ministry denounced activist Greta Thunberg's voyage as a public relations stunt, saying in a post on X that "the selfie yacht of the celebrities is safely making its way to the shores of Israel".

The members and crew Freedom Flotilla Coalition ship were reportedly "kidnapped" by the Israeli Army as they aimed to break the nation's blockade on Palestine.

Israel said the activists would return to their home countries and the aid would be sent to Gaza through established channels. It circulated footage of Israeli military personnel handing out sandwiches and water to the activists, who were wearing orange life vests.

Israel said the activists would return to their home countries and the aid would be sent to Gaza through established channels *PHOTO: X*

However, Left parties, including those from India denounced Israel, saying attacking a civilian humanitarian mission in international waters is a blatant violation of international law.

Meanwhile, Israel shot and killed at least eight people heading towards an aid distribution site in the Gaza strip. At least 127 people and wounded hundreds since the rollout of the new food distribution system, run by an Israeli and American organisation, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. *—PTI*

WHO IS GRETA THUNBERG?

The 22-year old Swedish climate activist began her green journey when she was just 8, persuading her parents to adopt carbon-footprint eliminating lifestyle choices. She started her 'Fridays for Future movement' when she was 15 and has received numerous awards, including nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize. Thunberg's blunt speaking manner has allowed her to rise as a global icon. However, after she donned the Palestinian keffiyeh scarf last year, legacy media increasingly ignored her.

TIMELINE OF THUNBERG'S JOURNEY

1 JUNE
Thunberg and 12 other activists set sail from Sicily, Italy, on a mission to challenge Israel's naval blockade and deliver humanitarian supplies to Gaza.

5 JUNE
The ship, the Madleen, stopped to rescue 4 migrants, who had jumped overboard to avoid detention by Libyan coast guard.

9 JUNE
About 200km from Gaza, Madleen was boarded by the Israel Defense Forces, who detained the activists.

3:34AM, 9 JUNE
A pre-recorded video from Thunberg was posted on the Freedom Flotilla Coalition's X account, claiming that she had been kidnapped.

PHOTO: ANI

Gold prices fall ₹280 to settle at ₹97,780/10g

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity fell Rs 280 to Rs 97,780 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Monday. The precious metal had declined by Rs 1,630 to Rs 98,060 per 10 grams on Saturday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity dipped Rs 250 to Rs 97,350 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had depreciated by Rs 1,500 to Rs 97,600 per 10 grams in the previous market close. Globally, spot gold rose marginally to USD 3,312.84 per ounce. Silver prices soared Rs 1,000 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 1,08,100 per kilogram in the national capital on Monday, in line with firm global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Spot silver rose 0.9 per cent to USD 36.30 per ounce in the international market. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 4P to close at 85.64 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

The rupee appreciated 4 paise to close at 85.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, supported by a firm trend in domestic equities and foreign capital inflows. However, elevated global crude oil prices and the US dollar against major rivals overseas restricted its rise, traders said. The rupee benefitted from the initial reaction to the RBI rate cut, but the aggressive rate cut narrows the interest rate differential with global peers, they added. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit witnessed a volatile trading session. It opened at 85.61 and moved between a high of 85.45 and a low of 85.72 against the greenback. The local unit pared all its initial gains and settled in positive territory, 4 paise higher at 85.64 (provisional) against the American currency. *—PTI*

Lalithaa Jewellery to raise ₹1,700 cr via public issue

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Chennai-based Lalithaa Jewellery Mart has submitted preliminary documents to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to raise Rs 1,700 crore via an Initial Public Offering (IPO). The proposed offering comprises a fresh issue of shares valued at Rs 1,200 crore and an offer for sale worth Rs 500 crore by M. Kiran Kumar Jain, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP). The IPO includes an employee reservation and a discount for eligible staff. Proceeds from the fresh issue, which amounts to Rs 1,014.50 crore, will primarily fund the establishment of new stores and support general corporate needs. Lalithaa, which opened its first store in T Nagar, Chennai, in 1985, currently operates 56 outlets across several states. *—PTI*

L&T bags order from JSW worth ₹1K cr to ₹2.5K cr

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Monday said it has bagged a "significant order" crore from JSW Energy to execute a pump storage project in Maharashtra. The order was bagged by the heavy civil infrastructure vertical of L&T, the infrastructure major said in a regulatory filing. The L&T uses the term "significant order" to refer to contracts valued between Rs 1,000 crore and Rs 2,500 crore. The order has been bagged for the "execution of Bhavali Pumped Storage Project in the state of Maharashtra," the filing said. The project is strategically located across the Nashik and Thane districts of Maharashtra and is designed to have a total installed capacity of 1,500 mw, comprising various small units. *—PTI*

Warner Bros Discovery to split into two companies

NEW YORK, 9 JUNE

- The media giant's split into Streaming & Studios and Global Networks is expected to be completed by the mid-2026, according to reports

Warner Bros Discovery (WBD) will split into two public companies by next year, calving off its cable operations from its streaming service, the media giant announced Monday. The split into Streaming & Studios and Global Networks is expected to be completed by the mid-2026.

The Streaming & Studios will include Warner Bros Television, Warner Bros Motion Picture Group, DC Studios, HBO and HBO Max, as well as their film and television libraries.

The Global Networks will include CNN, TNT Sports in the US, Discovery, top free-to-air channels across Europe and digital products such as the Discovery+ streaming service and Bleacher Report.

The WBD's CEO David Zaslav will serve as the CEO of Streaming & Studios. Its Chief Financial Officer Gunnar Wiedenfels will serve as the CEO of Global Networks. Both of them will continue in their current roles until the separation.

"By operating as two distinct and optimized companies in the future, we are empowering these iconic brands with the sharper focus and strategic flexibility they need to compete most effectively in today's evolving media landscape," Zaslav said in a media statement.

The news confirms earlier reporting by CNBC and others that the WBD was considering such a move. In December, the company announced restructuring that many saw as a precursor to a full break, reports said.

The development comes as cable giant Comcast has started the process of separating its portfolio of cable networks, including CNBC, into a new publicly company called Versant. *—Agencies*

Markets rise for 4th day in a row on global rally

Sensex climbs by 256.22 pts; Nifty surges by 100.15 pts

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

Stock markets closed higher for a fourth consecutive day on Monday driven by gains in banking and financial shares and a rally in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 256.22 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 82,445.21 as 21 of its constituents closed higher and nine declined. During the day, it jumped 480.01 points or 0.58 per cent to 82,669.

The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 100.15 points or 0.40 per cent to 25,103.20.

In the four-day rally to Monday, Nifty has gained over 560 points or 2.27 per cent while Sensex has jumped 1,707 points or 2.1 per cent.

Optimism over a new round of trade talks between the US and China also drove the markets higher.

PHOTO: PTI

Analysts said the Central Bank's jumbo 50 basis point rate cut last week has boosted investor sentiment helping most sectoral indices close higher.

Energy, IT, and financial sectors emerged as lead gainers while broader market indices outperformed benchmark indicators.

"Financial stocks extended their rally in Indian markets, driven by the RBI's supportive aggressive policy of rate and CRRA cut. These actions have boosted investor confidence and are expected to enhance liquidity in the near to medium term, especially in midcaps," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Among Sensex stocks, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finance, Axis Bank, Power Grid, IndusInd Bank, Maruti, Bajaj Finserv and NTPC were the biggest gainers.

However, Eternal, ICICI Bank, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, Adani Ports, Tata Steel and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.19 per cent and midcap climbed 1.03 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, utilities rallied 1.65 per cent, power (1.43 per cent), services (1.35 per cent), oil & gas (1.12 per cent), IT (1.02 per cent) and energy (0.93 per cent).

Realty emerged as the only laggard. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Shein, Reliance Retail eye overseas market

SINGAPORE, 9 JUNE

Fashion retailer Shein and its partner, Reliance Retail, are set to significantly grow their Indian supplier base and commence international sales of Shein-branded clothing made in India within the next six to twelve months. This move follows the US tariffs on Chinese imports, prompting Shein to diversify its sourcing, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

Currently, Shein sources products from 150 Indian garment manufacturers, but the aim is to increase this figure to 1,000 within a year. Shein clarified that its partnership with Reliance is focused on licensing its brand for domestic consumption in India. Meanwhile, Reliance has contracted 150 manufacturers and is in talks with 400 more.

Launched in India in 2018, Shein faced a setback when its app was banned in 2020 due to governmental actions against Chinese firms. However, it returned this year under a new licensing agreement with Reliance. The retailer plans to showcase India-made clothes on its U.S. and UK websites, with ongoing discussions about timelines depending on supplier numbers.

Reliance aims to adopt Shein's on-demand manufacturing approach, enabling suppliers to produce limited runs of designs based on market demand. *—Agencies*

Lilavati sues HDFC Bank CEO over 'fraud'

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

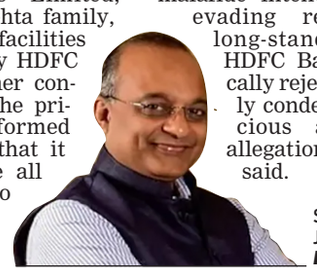
Lilavati Kirtilal Mehta Medical Trust (LKMM Trust) has called for the immediate suspension and prosecution of HDFC Bank Managing Director and CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan, alleging that he was involved in "serious financial fraud, criminal conspiracy, abuse of fiduciary position, evidence tampering and obstruction of justice."

The trust has filed an FIR against HDFC Bank's MD and CEO.

However, HDFC Bank on Sunday evening said in an exchange filing that in 2001, Splendour Gems Limited, owned by the Mehta family, defaulted on loan facilities granted in 1995 by HDFC Bank and the other consortium banks. The private lender informed stock exchanges that it vows to continue all lawful remedies to recover the dues from the defaulter.

According to the bank, the Trust's dues, including interest, amount to approximately Rs 65.22 crore as of 31 May, 2025.

"In response to ongoing recovery proceedings, members of the Mehta family have initiated multiple legal actions and complaints against HDFC Bank and its senior officials. These include criminal complaints, minority rights petitions and representations to regulatory authorities – all of which have been dismissed or are under legal challenge. HDFC Bank firmly believes that these allegations are retaliatory in nature and have malafide intention solely at evading repayment of long-standing dues. HDFC Bank unequivocally rejects and strongly condemns the malicious and baseless allegations," the bank said. *—Agencies*



Sashidhar Jagdishan
PHOTO: X

Qualcomm to acquire Alphawave for $2.4B

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

In a bid to strengthen its AI technology, American chipmaker Qualcomm is eyeing to takeover Alphawave for USD 2.4 billion. This disclosure makes Alphawave the latest British company to be acquired in a market witnessing low valuations and stunted growth.

Its shareholders will receive 183 pence per share. It will amount to a near 96 per cent premium to the closing price on 31 March.

As Qualcomm disclosed its interest, Alphawave shares witnessed a jump – it was up 23.1 per cent, trading just above the offer price.

Jefferies said they do not expect the deal to meet any material regulatory obstacles, after Alphawave exited WiseWave, its Chinese joint venture, on Monday.

Qualcomm also made two alternative all-share offers for Alphawave on Monday, but the latter plans to unanimously recommend the cash offer to its shareholders, sources said.

Meanwhile, US-based quantum computing company IonQ has agreed to buy UK tech start-up Oxford Ionics in a for USD 1.1 billion.

Alphawave, which designs semiconductor tech for data centers, is a strategic buy for Qualcomm, which announced its return to the data center CPU market in May.

"Alphawave has developed leading high-speed wired connectivity and compute technologies that are complementary to our power-efficient CPU and neural processing unit (NPU) cores," said Qualcomm President and CEO Cristiano Amon.

Alphawave received interest in April from SoftBank-owned Arm for its 'serdes' tech, which boosts chip data processing speeds and underpins Broadcom's and Marvell Technology's custom chip businesses. *—Agencies*

GOYAL BEGINS SWISS, SWEDEN TRIP TO DEEPEN TRADE TIES

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Piyush Goyal
PHOTO: X

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will meet Swiss and Swedish business leaders this week and discuss ways to boost trade and investments, an official statement said on Sunday. He is visiting Switzerland and Sweden from 9 to 13 June.

The visit is commencing from Bern in Switzerland, where the minister will engage with global CEOs and industry figures to explore avenues for enhanced bilateral trade and investment. He will hold discussions with companies from sectors, including pharma and life sciences, precision engineering, amid high-tech manufacturing. Goyal will also discuss potential opportunities arising from the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, the commerce and industry ministry said. *—PTI*

SBI pays ₹8,076.84 cr dividend to Centre for financial year 2024-25

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

- During 2024–25, the bank earned a net profit of Rs 70,901 crore, as against Rs 61,077 crore in the preceding year

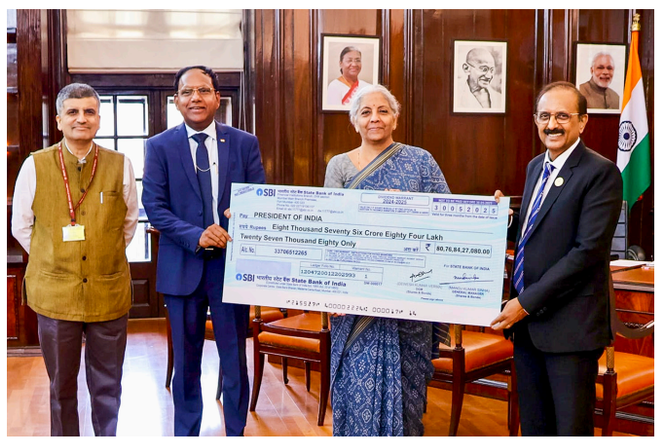
The State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday paid a dividend of Rs 8,076.84 crore to the government for the financial year 2024-25.

The dividend cheque was presented to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman by SBI Chairman C S Setty in the presence of Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju and Finance Secretary Ajay Seth.

"Smt @nsitharaman receives a dividend cheque of Rs 8076.84 crore for FY 2024-25 from Shri C S Setty, Chairman-@TheOfficialSBI," the minister's office said in a post on X.

SBI declared a dividend of Rs 15.90 per share for the financial year 2024-25, higher than Rs 13.70 per equity share distributed for the previous year. SBI had paid a dividend of Rs 6,959.29 crore to the government last year.

During 2024-25, the bank earned a record net profit of Rs 70,901 crore, as against Rs 61,077 crore in the preceding year, registering a 16 per cent increase. *—PTI*



Nirmala Sitharaman, on behalf of the Union government, receives a cheque for Rs 8,076.84 crore from SBI Chairman CS Setty
PHOTO: PTI

JIO BLACKROCK APPOINTS LEADERSHIP TEAM

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

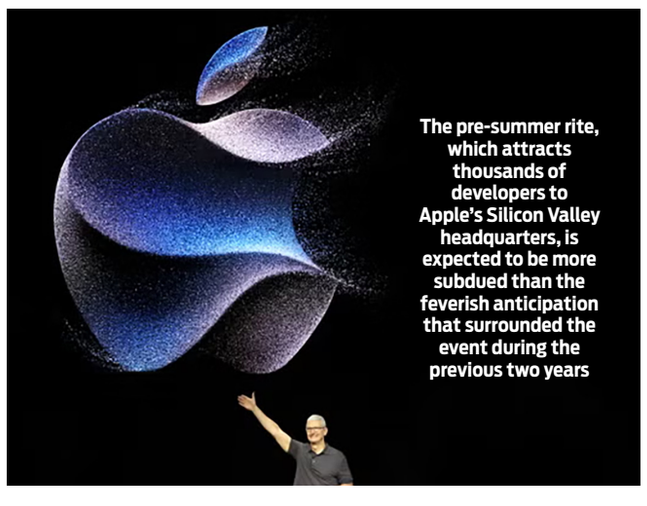
Jio BlackRock Asset Management (JBAM), a joint venture between Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL) and US-based BlackRock, has announced the establishment of its executive leadership team to spearhead its operations in the Indian mutual fund sector. Last month, Sid Swaminathan was appointed as the MD and CEO.

The new leadership team, including Amit Bhosale as Chief Risk Officer, Amol Pai as Chief Technology Officer, and Biraja Tripathy as Head of Product, brings together substantial expertise in asset management, digital innovation, and customer-focused product development. This team is poised to advance Jio BlackRock's aim of making investment opportunities more accessible and affordable for a wider audience in India.

Additionally, the company has launched an early access initiative on its website, inviting interested individuals to register for a preview of its digital-first offerings. Participants will gain access to educational resources covering the fundamental concepts of investing, as well as tools for engagement ahead of the official launch. On 26 May 2025, JBAM received regulatory approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India. *—PTI*

WORLDWIDE DEVELOPERS' CONFERENCE

Apple heads to annual showcase amid AI missteps


The pre-summer rite, which attracts thousands of developers to Apple's Silicon Valley headquarters, is expected to be more subdued than the feverish anticipation that surrounded the event during the previous two years

WASHINGTON, 9 JUNE

After stumbling out of the starting gate in Big Tech's pivotal race to capitalise on artificial intelligence, Apple will try to regain its footing on Monday at its annual Worldwide Developers' Conference.

The pre-summer rite, which attracts thousands of developers to Apple's Silicon Valley headquarters, is expected to be more subdued than the feverish anticipation that surrounded the event during the previous two years.

But heading into this year's showcase, Apple faces nagging questions about whether the nearly 50-year-old company has lost some of the mystique and innovative drive that turned it into a tech trendsetter.

Instead of making a big splash as it did with the Vision Pro headset, Apple this year is expected to focus on an overhaul of its software that may include a new, more tactile look for the iPhone's native apps and a new nomenclature for identifying its operating system updates.

Even though it might look like Apple is becoming a technological laggard, Forrester Research analyst Thomas Husson contends the company still has ample time to catch up in an AI race that's "more of a marathon, than a sprint. It will force Apple to evolve its operating systems".

If reports about its iOS naming scheme pan out, Apple will switch to a method that automakers have used to telegraph their latest car models by linking them to the year after they first arrive at dealerships.

That would mean the next version of the iPhone operating system due out this autumn will be known as iOS 26 instead of iOS 19 – as it would be under the current sequential naming approach.

Meanwhile, Apple's references to AI may be less frequent than last year when the technology was the main attraction. *—PTI*

India gears up for HK test in Asian Cup Qualifiers

KOWLOON, 9 JUNE

Seeking its first win in the tournament, the Indian football team will face another acid test when it takes on Hong Kong in a crucial AFC Asian Cup 2027 round three qualifier match here on Tuesday. As per reports in the local media, all 50,000 tickets for the match have been sold out, setting a new attendance record for Hong Kong football. Manolo Marquez's men will have their task cut out as they face a Hong Kong side that has been revitalised under the guidance of manager Ashley Westwood, who knows a lot about Indian football and will certainly look to use his knowledge to the home side's advantage.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Harry Brook celebrates England's second series win

BRISTOL, 9 JUNE

England cricket captain Harry Brook praised the unity of his "group of mates" Sunday after sealing his second series win in just 11 days. England won the second Twenty20 cricket international against West Indies by four wickets with nine balls remaining to take an insurmountable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. England scored 199-6 in 18.3 overs after West Indies lost the toss and posted 196. Brook has won five in a row against the West Indies since taking over from Jos Buttler, including a 3-0 sweep in the ODI matches. England didn't have it easy at Bristol, with the asking rate climbing past 11 per over at one stage as it chased down the West Indies' target.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

PL's first Black referee Uriah Rennie dies at 65

SHEFFIELD, 9 JUNE

Uriah Rennie, the first Black referee in the Premier League, has died. He was 65. "We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our former chair and trailblazing referee, Uriah Rennie," the Sheffield and Hallamshire County Football Association posted Sunday on X."Uriah made history as the Premier League's first Black referee, officiating over 300 top-flight matches between 1997 and 2008," the statement said. "He broke down barriers, shaped our football community, and inspired generations to come."—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Saptak Talwar struggles in final round

LUCERNE, 9 JUNE

India's Saptak Talwar struggled in windy conditions to card a 7-over 78 in the final round, finishing tied 44th at the Swiss Challenge here. After three steady under-par rounds had positioned him for a strong finish, the Indian golfer struggled on the final day and slipped out of contention. Talwar, who was inside the top 20 heading into the last round, tumbled down the leaderboard to end the tournament tied for 44th. He began his round on the front nine and had already dropped five shots halfway through the round. He had a double bogey on the third followed by a bogey on 4th and another two bogeys on the sixth and seventh holes.—*PTI*

Kolkata, Delhi swap Tests against WI and SA

BCCI release doesn't state the reason for the venue swap

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Kolkata's Eden Gardens and Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium will swap their allocated Test matches against West Indies and South Africa, respectively, during India's upcoming home season, the BCCI announced on Monday.

While Delhi was set to host the opening Test against South Africa from November 14-18, it will now host the second Test against the West Indies starting on 10 October. Though the BCCI release doesn't state the reason for the venue swap, it is understood that air pollution levels in mid-November in the National Capital Region become a health hazard, as happened during a Test match against Sri Lanka a few years back. The Sri Lankan fielders were wearing masks, and a few reportedly suffered from breathing problems.

It is understood that BCCI's Cricket Operations team collated the AQI data over the past few years and decided that venue swap is a viable option. India's home season starts with two WTC Tests against West Indies, starting 2 October in Ahmedabad, followed by the Delhi Test. India then plays a full three-format series against South Africa, starting with two Tests, followed by three ODIs and five T20 Internationals across various Indian venues. While Kolkata hosts the opening Test against the Proteas, Guwahati's Barsapara Stadium will become the latest Test venue as the second Test will be played from 22 to 26 November. —*PTI*

Kolkata's Eden Gardens PHOTO: PTI

India must nail the conditions to do well in England: Former cricketers

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Former Indian cricketers on Monday advised the Shubman-Gill led side to ace the conditions in England for a successful tour while Michael Vaughan believes that the five-Test series could be a start of "something special" for the visitors.

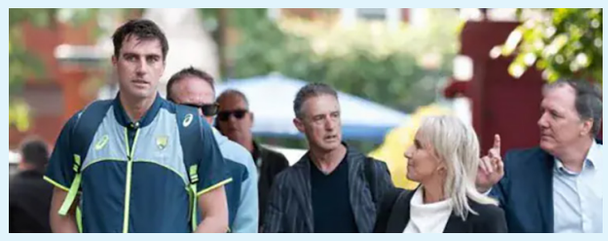
India is going through a transitional phase following the retirements of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and spin ace Ravichandran Ashwin, while fast bowler Mohammed Shami was not picked in the touring party.

India's team to England must adapt quickly and play

(according to the conditions. As someone who understands batting in English conditions and team dynamics, I believe discipline, patience, and support for each other are crucial," said Pujara. I am sure this tour will be a great opportunity for the growth and success of each player and the team as a whole," Pujara told Sony Sports, the official broadcaster of India's tour to England. —*PTI*

> **Shubman Gill as Test captain is a 'bold call' after Rohit, Kohli retirements**
>
> -Michael Vaughan, Former England captain

AUSTRALIA DENIED ACCESS TO TRAINING AT LORD'S



Pat Cummins' men were 'booted out' PHOTO: X/@PATCUMMINS30

LONDON, 9 JUNE

The Australian cricket team camp suffered a blow in their training plans for the ICC World Test Championship final against South Africa, after the team was reportedly denied permission to train at Lord's Cricket Ground.

A report claimed that the Australian team was told that the training ground at Lord's, the venue for the WTC final starting 11 June, wasn't available. While the exact reason behind the rejection that Pat Cummins and his men faced isn't known, it has also been reported that the members of the Indian team, in England for a 5-match Test series, were training at the same venue.

A report in Fox Cricket has claimed that the Indian team was permitted to train at Lord's "at the expense of the Australian team" while Pat Cummins' men were 'booted out'. The report also highlighted that while the WTC final starts on June 11, the Indian team doesn't play its first Test against England until June 20. India's Test against England at Lord's is the third match of the series, and will start on 10 July.

After being denied access initially, Australian players finally had the opportunity to test themselves at the venue on Sunday.

Australia captain Pat Cummins later spoke about his team's preparations, plans, and the abuse they constantly get whenever playing at Lord's.

"I think this is the best version of the stadium this morning," he said. "There's no one around, which is great. I'm sure it will be much more civil this time around.

"Things got pretty heated in the middle of that Ashes series, but I think a lot of them will have learned their lesson and I'm sure they'll be very polite."—*PTI*

Javed seeks to revolutionise Pakistan's NCA

KARACHI, 9 JUNE

Pakistan's former pacer and head coach Aaqib Javed has promised to turn the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Lahore into one of the most productive academies in world cricket.

Aaqib, who was appointed as the director of the NCA two months back, after his stint as interim head coach of the national teams ended in April, said he wanted to turn the academies in Pakistan into models for other cricket nations.

"We shouldn't have to look at other academies for guidance but develop our system, which other countries would look towards for guidance," he said in a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) podcast. —*PTI*

Maharaj: Want to honour legends of the past in ICC

LONDON, 9 JUNE

Keshav Maharaj is determined to follow in the famous footsteps of Graeme Smith and his world number one team of yesteryears at the World Test Championship final, beginning here Wednesday.

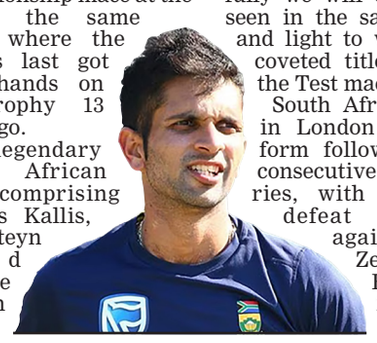
South Africa will face off against Australia for ownership of the ICC Test Championship mace at the Lord's, the same venue where the Proteas last got their hands on the trophy 13 years ago.

A legendary South African side comprising Jacques Kallis, Dale Steyn and Graeme Smith beat England at the fabled ground to rise to world number one that day, and Maharaj revealed those memories are fuelling motivation for his side to repeat the feat.

"I remember watching that when they lifted the mace," he said.

"We know that apart from doing it for us, we want to honour the legends of the past, and hopefully we will one day be seen in the same calibre and light to win such a coveted title and hold the Test mace."

South Africa arrived in London in strong form following seven consecutive Test victories, with their last defeat coming against New Zealand in February 2024.



ROTAX EURO TROPHY

Atiqa Mir first Indian to secure a top-10 finish

TRINEC, 9 JUNE

Ten-year-old Indian racing sensation Atiqa Mir added another first to her name by securing a creditable top-10 finish in the Rotax Euro Trophy, a major international karting series.

The Akcel GP-backed driver finished ninth in the Rotax Euro Trophy Round 2 staged at Steel Ring Circuit over the weekend.

Atiqa, the first Indian to get financial and technical support from Formula 1, had a strong qualifying, finishing seventh in her group.She had the misfortune of having two bumper penalties, but despite that, she finished in 10th place after three heats.

In the pre-finals on Sunday, the heavens opened up, and with no prior experience of driving in the wet on this track, Atiqa showed her exceptional natural talent and fought hard with the best drivers in the world.

Atiqa, who is mentored by India's first Formula 1 driver Narain Karthikeyan, qualified for the finals and was 10th on the grid. The finals were held in even more treacherous wet conditions, and Atiqa was in top form again. After dropping four places at the start, she fought back to finish ninth. Atiqa ended as the highest placed Indian and Asian in the highly competitive field.

Reflecting on the weekend, Atiqa said: "That was an amazing weekend, I learnt so much driving with the best drivers in the world. —*PTI*

Diksha Dagar shoots over par, out of top 10

TENERIFE, 9 JUNE

Diksha Dagar carded a dismal 1-over par 73 in the final round to finish tied 14th at the Tenerife Women's Open.

The Indian had been well placed to secure a top 10 finish after the third day, but a difficult final round saw her slip five places with a cumulative score of 4-under 284. The other Indian player to cut was Avani Prashanth, who, after a rough third round, played a fine final round of 4-under 68 and rose 23 spots to finish tied 20th.

Sara Kouskova, who moved into the lead at the end of the third day, converted that into her second consecutive LET title. —*PTI*

McIntosh smashes her 400m freestyle world record

LOS ANGELES, 9 JUNE

Titmus called Summer McIntosh "an absolute phenomenon" on Monday after the Canadian smashed her 400m freestyle world record, with the Australian star admitting it had got her "juices flowing" again.

The 18-year-old hit the wall in 3min 54.18sec at the Canadian world championship trials over the weekend, demolishing Olympic champion Titmus's 3:55.38.

"It stings a little bit when you get your world record broken," said Titmus, who is taking a season off before she dives back in to prepare for the 2028 Los Angeles Games."But I know how tough it is to swim that fast.

To break my world records, I was working for years and years."And to be 18 years old and to be swimming that incredibly off the back of the Olympic Games, she's an absolute phenomenon. To smash the world record like that, who knows how far she's going to go," she said.

Tearful Ronaldo says 'duty done' after Portugal Nations League win

TRINEC, 9 JUNE

Another trophy for Cristiano Ronaldo. More records, more adulation. The Portugal star shed tears after helping his team win the Nations League on Sunday.

"Winning for Portugal is always special. I have many titles with clubs, but nothing is better than winning for Portugal. It's tears. It's duty done and a lot of joy.

Ronaldo scored to help Portugal draw level with Spain 2-2 in the final, then watched as his teammates won the penalty shootout 5-3. "I have many titles with my clubs, but nothing is better than winning for Portugal," Ronaldo said. "These are tears. It's mission accomplished and so much joy." The 40-year-old Ronaldo had been the first to run out onto the field for the pre-game warmup, sparking a huge roar from the Portugal supporters, including many wearing jerseys emblazoned with his name. His appearance prompted many supporters to pull out their cell phones to record the superstar while they could still see him in action. Ronaldo conceded Saturday that he won't be able to play forever. That was three days after he helped Portugal to its first win over Germany for 25 years, scoring the winner for a 2-1 victory in the Nations League semifinals. —*PTI*

BOISSON SOARS 296 PLACES

Sinner keeps top spot despite loss to Alcaraz

PARIS, 9 JUNE

Lois Boisson, the revelation of the French Open, has rocketed 296 places up the WTA rankings after her fairy-tale run at Roland-Garros.

The Frenchwoman, who was 361st before making it to the semifinals at the clay-court Grand Slam last week, jumped to 65th in the latest edition of the rankings published Monday.

Coco Gauff defeated Boisson in the semifinals en route to her first French Open title. There was no change at the top of the rankings, with Aryna Sabalenka leading the pack ahead of Gauff and her fellow American Jessica Pegula.

Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz PHOTO: X / @ROLANDGARROS

Sabalenka lost to Gauff in the Roland-Garros final.

A wild-card entry in Paris, Boisson upset the third-seeded Pegula to reach the quarterfinals, then defeated sixth-ranked Mirra Andreeva before Gauff ended her unexpected run.

After retaining his title on Sunday in the longest ever final at Roland-Garros against top-ranked Jannik Sinner, Carlos Alcaraz remained in second spot in the men's ATP rankings behind his Italian rival. Despite the loss, Sinner increased his lead to 2,030 points because Alcaraz, as the defending champion, was unable to add any points. Sinner gained 500 points by reaching the final, having lost in the semifinals last year.

Third-ranked Alexander Zverev dropped 900 points after his loss to Novak Djokovic in the quarterfinals. —*PTI*

Bouanga's 1 goal, 2 assists help LAFC beat Sporting

LOS ANGELES, 9 JUNE

Denis Bouanga had a goal and two assists, Eddie Segura scored his first goal since 2020, and Los Angeles FC extended its unbeaten streak to nine games with a 2-1 win over Sporting Kansas City on Sunday night.

Bouanga converted from the penalty spot in the 59th to give LAFC (7-4-5), which had 56% possession and outshot Kansas City 21-5, a 2-1 lead.

Dejan Joveljic scored a goal for the fourth consecutive game when he ran onto a through ball played ahead by Manu García, exploded into the area, and scored from near the penalty spot to make it 1-0 in the 39th minute. The 25-year-old Joveljic, who scored 15 goals and had six assists last season and was acquired in February from the LA Galaxy in exchange for $4 million, is tied for third in MLS with 10 goals this season, five in the past four games. Segura slipped a header off a corner kick played into the center of the area by Bouanga, inside the back post in first-half stoppage time. —*PTI*